SIR KETUMILE MASIRE

Commemorative Brochure
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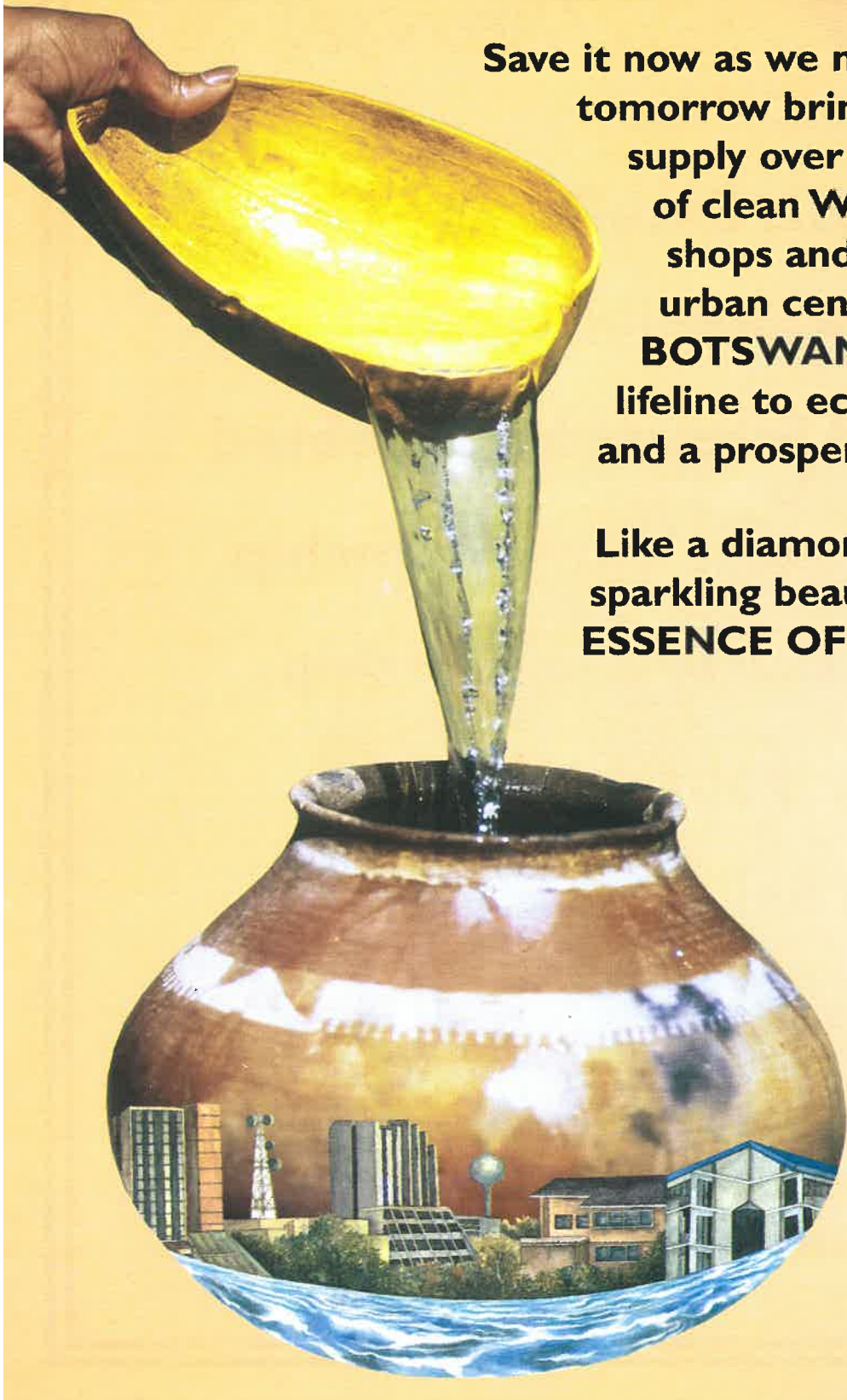

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Mme-Mma Gaone.

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as President

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in his retirement.

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FOREWORD

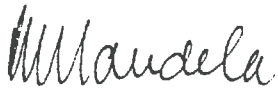
Sir Ketumile Masire, a distinguished statesman, takes leave of the highest office of Botswana with great honour and dignity. I wish to extend warm greetings and best wishes to Sir Ketumile and Lady Masire.

Botswana has a proud history as a democratic country and as a model of economic success. South Africa has much to learn from you, Sir Ketumile, both from your towering successes and your efforts to deal with difficulties.

Sir Ketumile's legacy extends far beyond the borders of Botswana. As Chairperson of the Southern African Development Community, he played a significant role in redefining its objects and strengthening ties amongst member states.

Such attributes have made Sir Ketumile a natural and capable leader of the region's collective efforts towards growth and development within the framework of SADC. The giant strides we have taken in the last few years towards building SADC as a powerful engine for development, were made possible by the foundation laid by visionaries such as Sir Ketumile Masire.

Your leadership in the region's efforts to promote peace and stability on our subcontinent and further afield has been invaluable. We salute you, Sir Ketumile, on your retirement, and wish the Masire family a joyous and fulfilling life in the future.



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His Excellency
Sir Ketumile Masire
President of the Republic of Botswana

Your Excellency,

"On behalf of the Government and people of Australia, I wish to convey my best wishes on the occasion of your retirement from Office.

During the period of your Presidency, Botswana has evolved into a healthy functioning democracy, noted both for its political stability and impressive economic performance. Your country's progress since Independence in 1966 is an achievement of which you, the Government and people of Botswana should be proud.

As fellow members of the Commonwealth, Australia and Botswana share a warm relationship, strengthened in more recent years by growing trade and investment relations and people-to-people links. Australia looks forward to developing even closer relations with the Government and people of Botswana.

On behalf of the people of Australia, I would like to reiterate my best wishes on this significant occasion.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration."

William Deane
Governor-General of Australia

Message from:
Dr Bakili Muluzi
President - Republic of Malawi

On this auspicious occasion to mark the retirement of His Excellency Sir Ketumile Masire from active politics, the people and Government of the Republic of Malawi join me in paying tribute to a great African leader who has earned our admiration for his commitment to the respect of human rights and democratic principles.

Since 1980 when he was elected into the highest Office of the President of the Republic of Botswana, his country has enjoyed peace and stability and a rate of economic growth which remains unparalled throughout Africa.

President Masire provided dynamic leadership through war and peace. He formed the front line in the liberation struggle of Southern Africa which resulted in majority rule coming to Zimbabwe and apartheid being dismantled in South Africa. As Chairman of the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC), he steered the organisation from its establishment in 1992 up to 1996 when it became the larger Southern African Development Community (SADC). In this regard, he worked tirelessly for regional co-operation as the key to the door of prosperity in Southern Africa. It was against this background and in recognition of his mission to improve the quality of life of his people that President Masire was awarded the Africa Prize for Leadership in the development of a sustainable end to hunger.

President Masire has always struck me as a leader who is blessed with great vision and who always put welfare of his people before his personal interests. His decision to retire from active politics is a reflection of these qualities and an example to the rest of us in Africa.

President Masire and I have met on many occasions during which we have discussed the close and warm relations which exist between Malawi and Botswana. I will miss these meetings. I am consoled however, by the knowledge that even though he is leaving the active political arena, he has passed on his guiding principles to the new leaders in Botswana.

The people and Government of the Republic of Malawi join me in extending very good wishes to President Ketumile Masire for a happy retirement. May God Almighty bless him and give him continued good health.

Message from:
Dr the Hon. Navinchandra Ramgoolam
Prime Minister of Mauritius

The publication of a commemorative brochure on the occasion of the retirement of H.E. Sir Ketumile Masire from active politics is a fitting tribute to a great African whose leadership has changed not only the destiny of Botswana but also the perception of Africa as a whole.

The economic and political reforms which President Masire undertook since his election in 1980, and his commitment to the respect for human rights, good governance and democratic principles have paid rich dividends and have resulted in years of peace, stability and progress in Botswana. His achievements in transforming his country's economic political landscape won him international recognition when he was awarded the Africa prize for leadership in the development of a sustainable end to hunger.

A leader with a great vision, President Masire has been particularly active within the Organisation of African Unity and in the transition of the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) to the enlarged Southern African Development Community (SADC), which he chaired since its establishment in 1992 until 1996. During his presidency, SADC emerged as a dynamic organisation for regional co-operation gaining extensive international recognition and support. And, of course, one can never forget the crucial role Botswana has played under his leadership in the liberation struggle of South Africa and the dismantling of Apartheid.

Mauritius and Botswana enjoy excellent relations and President Masire and I have had the opportunity to discuss issues of bilateral and regional interest on various occasions. I have been highly impressed by his sincerity of purpose in all his endeavours towards the improvement of the quality of life of his people and by his strong belief in regional co-operation as the engine of growth and prosperity for Africa. His retirement from active politics will be strongly felt but I am confident that his wisdom will continue to guide the new leaders in Botswana and the rest of Africa.

I wish President Masire a very happy retirement, continued good health and May God Bless him.

His Excellency
Sir Ketumile Masire
President of the Republic of Botswana

Your Excellency,

"Allow me to convey, on behalf of the People and the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, and on my own behalf, our best wishes to you as you prepare to implement your voluntary decision to step aside as President of your country at the end of March this year.

Your decision bestows honour on Botswana and Africa. Your statesmanship and long career in the leadership of your country and the sub-region, poses a monumental challenge to those of us that follow in your foot-steps within Botswana and in Southern Africa. You have set a very high standard for posterity. We will forever cherish and carry forward your inspiring achievements in promoting and consolidating development, democracy and stability which have been the defining characteristics of the Republic of Botswana over the years.

The excellent bilateral relations of friendship, solidarity and co-operation between our two countries and peoples, and the making of the Southern African Development Community into a viable economic entity, among other remarkable achievements, will remain enduring monuments to your leadership, wisdom, guidance and patronage.

Always be available to render us the necessary support and guidance which we are certain to seek on a regular basis.

Let me once again, Your Excellency, extend to you, Lady Masire, and your family my personal best wishes for your continued good health, happiness, long life and success in your future endeavours."

Benjamin William Mkapa
President of the United Republic of Tanzania

.... I recall with nostalgia, my collaboration with compatriots, in and out of Parliament, some still living but others no longer with us. I recall in particular my collaboration with my friend and colleague, my predecessor, Seretse Khama and others. I feel that I have played my part, gave my very best – and regret only that one's best is not always sufficient.

MAY GOD BLESS THIS NATION.

Ketumile Masire

10th November 1997

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Sir Ketumile Masire

Sir Ketumile Masire

Over the past three decades His Excellency Sir Ketumile Masire has been the leading architect of modern Botswana. As this nation's first and longest serving minister of Finance and Development Planning, as well as the first Vice-President and then President, he has overseen the principal blueprints for the construction of post-colonial Botswana. It is a process that began with his 1966 presentation of the Transitional Plan for Social and Economic Development and has now culminated with his valedictory launching of Vision 2016.

Under Sir Ketumile's stewardship Botswana has enjoyed the highest economic growth rate in Africa, a sustained record that has only been rivalled by some of the East Asian tiger economies. While it is true that he did not plant the diamonds in the ground that made this growth possible, his tireless commitment to planning and attention to detail have helped assure that the nation maximised the benefits derived from its mineral wealth. The rest of the continent is full of resource rich, but failed, economies.

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It is also true that record economic growth has left nearly half of all Botswana still in poverty. Even the poorest have, however, benefited from the rapid expansion of social services, local employment and educational opportunities. This fundamental reality is reflected in United Nation's Human Development Index statistics. Under Masire's direction the nation has come a long way. Under his successors it still has a long way to go.

Less conspicuous, but arguably of equal importance has been Sir Ketumile's quietly effective role as an international statesman, more especially his contributions towards advancing the political liberation and regional integration of Southern Africa. While having to take into account Botswana's inherent vulnerabilities, he was from the beginning outspoken in rejecting accommodations that would have reduced the nation to the status of a political satellite of neighbouring racist regimes. This commitment has been honoured with his naming as Patron of the International Committee Against Apartheid, Racism and Colonialism in Southern Africa, and the International Committee in Solidarity with Front Line States and National Liberation, as well as his election as first Vice-Chairman of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU).

From 1979 onwards Masire has played a leading role in the formation and development of SADCC/SADC, serving as its Chairman form 1980-96. He has also served for many years as the Co-Chairman of the Global Coalition for Africa, while he received his knighthood in 1991 largely in recognition of his long-term contributions towards promoting understanding and consensus within the Commonwealth.

The quality of Masire's leadership, both internal and external, is rooted in his character. It is his humility, general tolerance, and good humour, along with intelligence, reformist instinct and capacity for hard work that have made him into an outstanding statesman. Modern Africa has had other intelligent, dedicated leaders. At least a few have possessed greater charisma. But, none have been less spoilt by power.

A typical incident occurred two years ago when the President allowed himself to be dragged into the circus ring by a clown in order to play air guitar with a bunch of kids. After half a long lifetime at the top Masire is still able to make fun of himself in front of a crowd. He is also a politician capable of smiling warmly in the face of criticism. Through such traits the cosmopolitan Sir Ketumile has personified much of what is best in Botswana's indigenous democratic culture.

The President also exemplifies the best and brightest of his generation. Out of the hallowed halls of such institutions as Tiger Kloof and Moeng, but also among the much larger group of more informally educated, came men and woman enthused with a spirit of rationalism and a will for public service that have served this country well.

The first born son of Joni Masire and his wife Gaipone (nee Kgopo), Botswana's second President was born in Kanye on the 23rd day of July 1925. He was named Ketumile ("I am famous") after one of his maternal uncles. He was also given the "Christian name" Quett during his early infancy, which is a shortened version of Marquette, the latter being the surname of a prominent seventeenth century French missionary-explorer.

After several years minding his father's cattle post, Masire began his formal education at Rachele Primary School in 1938. There he made rapid progress. In 1944 he was able to attend secondary school at Tiger Kloof

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well on their retirement and
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(near Vryburg in South Africa) on a government bursary, one of the first awarded to a non-royal. Thereafter, he qualified for a further bursary to undertake tertiary studies at the University of Fort Hare. But, the death of his parents within a few months of each

As a student at Tygerkloof

other in 1946 confronted him with new burdens.

Completing his Matric studies, while also earning a Primary Teaching Certificate, he returned to Kanye to 1949 to support his younger siblings.

In January 1950 a now twenty-four year old Masire was appointed as the first Headmaster of Kanye Junior Secondary School, later upgraded and renamed Seepapitso II Secondary School. Besides administering the school, the first of its kind in the Southern District, he was called upon to teach six or more different subjects. During lessons he often amused the class by writing on one side of the blackboard with his left hand, before shifting over to his right hand for the other side. Born left handed, he had become ambidextrous while at primary school.

In December 1955 Masire left full-time teaching to pursue success as commercial farmer. A year later he became the first indigenous Motswana to be awarded a Master Farmer's Certificate by the then colonial Department of Agriculture. His success

Sir Ketumile - the master farmer

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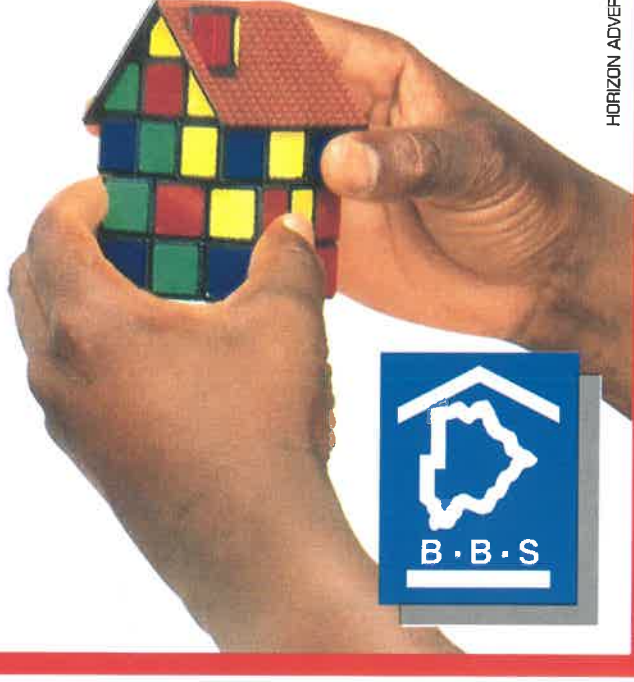

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in putting his lessons to practice, with record harvests and a string of agricultural show awards aroused envy in some. His outspoken support for such agricultural reforms as a putting up drift fences and allowing the free marketing of agricultural products, then under the jurisdiction of buyer co-operatives, also led to conflict with the local, Bangwaketse, Kgosi (or Chief) Bathoen II. Of one encounter in the kgotla (traditional council place) he recalls:

"It was my contention that the main problem was that boys herded cattle primarily to ensure that they did not get into corn fields and the girls were equally keeping a watch out at the lands to stop cattle from getting into the fields in the event that their brothers lost them. I therefore suggested that what have come to be called drift fences be used to separate cattle areas from lands areas. As soon as I sat down the Chief shot up, which was unusual, to pooh-pooh what I said and referred to me as "Raterata" [literally, "Father of fences"]. I was from that day nicknamed Raterata, a name I have come to be very fond of, as I am wedded to fencing as a management tool of both land and livestock".

After another, more bitter, kgotla confrontation over Masire's decision to bypass the Bangwaketse cattle marketing co-operative, Bathoen took away a large proportion of Masire's land on the pretext that others were complaining about encroachment.

Masire's zeal for scientific farming methods nearly proved lethal at the end of 1957 when he was accidentally poisoned while transporting Agracin, a mercuric-chloride based fungicide. The resulting hospitalisation coincided with his scheduled marriage to Gladys Olebile Molefi. Despite doctors'

The wedding ceremony

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warnings that the groom might never recover, the bride insisted on going ahead with the wedding. Family members and a few friends filled the SDA hospital ward for marriage with some inconvenience. To this day the first couple have not yet found time for a honeymoon though Sir Ketumile is on record as stating "I want one when I retire". In their four decades of marriage the Masire's have been blessed with three daughters- Gaone, Mmasekgoa and Matshidiso, and three sons, Mpho, Mmetla and Moabi.

It was also in 1957 that Masire became a journalist, being commissioned as the chief correspondent for the African Echo supplement of Bechuanaland Protectorate and Northern Cape news that appeared in the then revived English/Setswana newspaper Naledi ya Batswana. Within the Protectorate he helped organise a string of anonymous freelance reporters who included such luminaries as "Push & Pull (Amos Dambe), "Observer" (Leetile Raditladi), "Loyalist" (Monametsi Chiepe) "P.M. Shaba" (Peter Sebina) and "Tribesman" (his old Tiger Kloof classmate Moutlakgola Nwako). In the process he became better acquainted with Botswana as a whole. He later put this on the job training to partisan use by founding the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) newspaper Therisanyo, which between 1964-67 was published on a monthly basis. Journalism proved to be a setting stone to politics.

Masire's career as a national politician began in 1961, when he was elected to sit in both the newly created African and Legislative Councils (Legco). It was in these fora he came into regular contact with future first President Seretse Khama forming the partnership that would lead Botswana to independence. In Masire's words:

"Between Seretse and I it was love at first sight. We clicked the first day we met (at Legco)."

At a caucus meeting in November 1961 the

Sir Ketumile as Vice-President with the late President Sir Seretse Khama and members of Parliament

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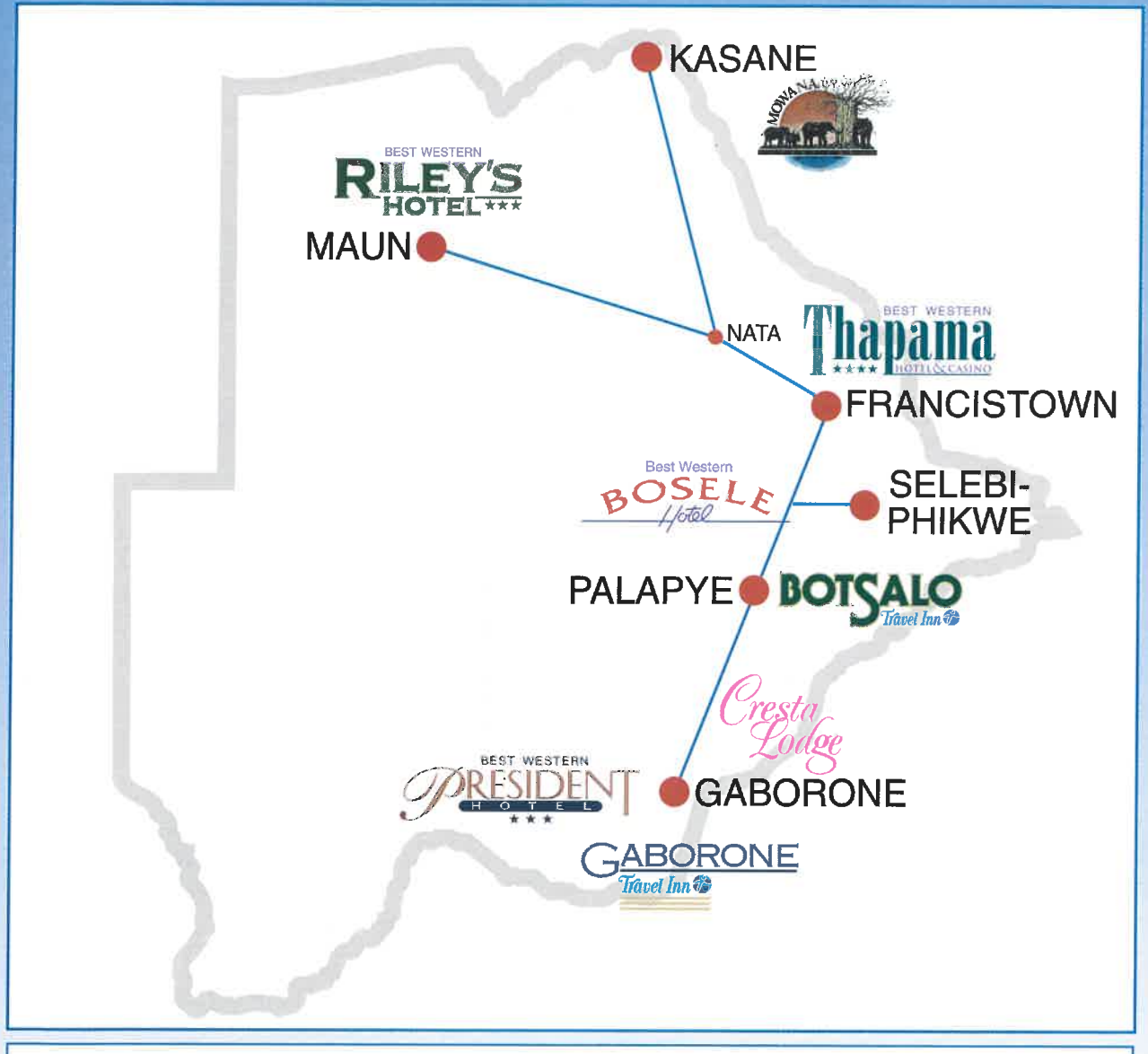

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two, along with Archelous Tsoebebe, Goareng Mosinyi, and Tsheko Tsheko agreed to move ahead with the formation of a "National Democratic Party". Along with Khama and Tsoebebe he was tasked with drafting a constitution that was presented before a January 1962 meeting of interested parties held in Mahalapye. Thereafter as the BDP's first Secretary-General he took the lead in organising for victory at the grass-roots, through an exhaustive schedule of nation-wide canvassing that by 1964 had landed him for a period at Gauteng's Baragwanath Hospital. In addition to his almost single handed production of Therisanyo, he popularised the party by drafting and widely distributing a statement of its principals entitled Maitlomo le Maikaelelo.

After the BDP's 1965 landslide victory in Botswana's first one person one vote elections, Masire was appointed as Deputy Prime Minister. At independence the post was re-entitled Vice President. In the final months of 1965 it was Masire who was entrusted by Khama with drafting an amended constitution in preparation for independence. In subsequent, private, talks with British officials outside an annual Labour Party conference, it was agreed that independence would be formally granted on 30 September 1966, a convenient date which had been previously celebrated as "Protectorate Day".

Between 1966-80 Masire excelled in three jobs at once - as Vice President, Minister of Finance and/or Development Planning, and the BDP's hands on Secretary-General. Due to bouts of ill health on Khama's part, he was on a number of occasions also called upon to act as President. He recalls:

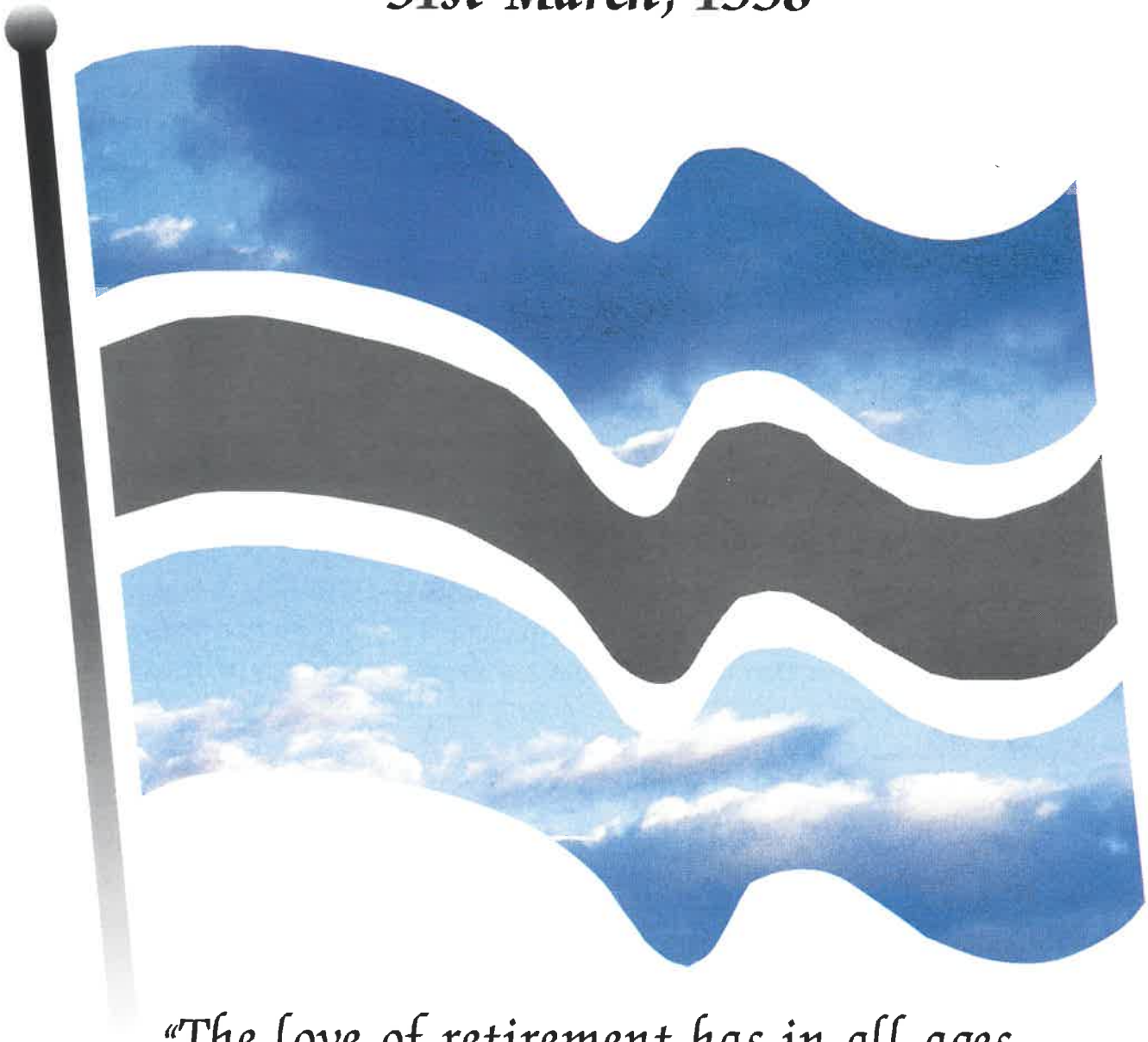
"I hardly knew the difference between being Acting President and Vice President, as Seretse and I were able to work hand in glove. I played my role and, if Seretse disliked my work, he could disapprove as he was the leader. But, most of the time I took no actions that were different from his".

In his role as Vice President Masire frequently represented the nation in important international gatherings. At independence many dismissed Botswana as little more than a Bantustan under South Africa's thumb. But, Khama and Masire shared a vision that the creation of a successful non-racial democracy in Botswana could contribute towards the liberation of Southern Africa as a whole. In this respect, Masire was further deputised by Khama to build diplomatic bridges between Botswana and the newly independent states north of the Zambezi. This process can be dated from 1964, when he travelled to Zambia to establish contact with Kenneth Kaunda. The two have remained lifelong friends, with Masire crediting K.K. for convincing him to become a vegetarian in recent years.

At the O.A.U. and elsewhere Masire fought an uphill battle to convince other key statesmen, notably including Tanzania's Julius Nyerere, of the strategic value of Botswana's independence. While Gaborone was not in a position to condone military activity on the part of freedom fighters from its territory, Masire differed from some of his cabinet colleagues in championing sympathetic relations with the liberation movements. With the decolonization of Angola and Mozambique in 1974, the special relationship that already existed between Botswana, Tanzania and Zambia was broadened to form the five member front line states grouping. This latter body had as its immediate focus the liberation of Namibia and Zimbabwe as a precursor to the ultimate overthrow of apartheid in South Africa.

Botswana's principled stand was not without

To His Excellency, Sir Ketumile Masire
on your retirement
31st March, 1998



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a cost. In incidents such as the 1978 Rhodesian massacre at Leshoma and 1985 South African attack on Gaborone, as well as countless smaller acts of terror, the neighbouring racist regimes tried unsuccessfully to bully Botswana into agreeing to security co-operation.

Masire also gained an international reputation as the technocrat overseeing Botswana's five year National Development Plans. In establishing the Ministry of Development Planning in 1967, which was merged with Finance in 1969 (MFDP), he had acted as the champion of a group of bright young civil servants, mostly local but including some influential expatriates, who wished to move Botswana beyond the conservative fiscal policies inherited from the colonial regime. The 1969 success of his team in renegotiating more favourable terms of membership in the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) and obtaining large scale overseas financial aid, most notably a 1971 World Bank loan of $ 32 million for financing the Shashe River project, were important breakthroughs. International agencies knew that they could rely on their MFDP counterparts. Recalls Masire: "They could always find a range of projects here when they had underspending problems."

Against all expectations in 1972 Masire's MFDP was able to achieve budgetary independence from further British grants-in-aid. MFDP's successful launching to the Pula in 1976, over the objections of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), coupled with the establishment of the Bank of Botswana, laid the basis for the accumulation of today's enormous government cash reserves. Botswana's first post-independence national elections in 1969 were both a triumph and setback for Masire. The BDP won the election, while his draft of its election manifesto outlined for the first time what would come to be accepted as the nation's four guiding national principals or pillars- Unity, Self-reliance, Development, and Democracy with Social Justice.

But, Masire lost his Kanye seat in a tough campaign against Bathoen, who abdicated from bogosi (chieftainship) to take up politics. Masire was brought back to parliament as a specially elected MP., subsequently winning back and retaining the Ngwaketse-Kgalagadi seat in the 1974 and 1979 elections.

On Sunday 13 July 1980 Masire had the sad task of announcing the death of Seretse Khama. Others present during Seretse's last days recall his conviction that Quett should be his successor.

Notwithstanding this, and his position as Vice President, Masire's succession was initially challenged by a BDP faction favouring his old Tiger Kloof classmate, Moutlakgolo Nwako. In the end, however, even opposition MPs, as a gesture of national unity, joined their BDP colleagues in confirming Masire's accession to the highest office. During his first years at State House, Masire was confronted by the twin challenges of a slump in diamond prices and the onset of prolonged drought. Resisting the temptation for a quick fix to the diamond crisis his government co-operated with DeBeers International's strategy of stockpiling to restore market control. An upsurge in diamond sales form the mid- 1980's allowed Debswana to sell off its accumulated surplus for a 5% share in DeBeers International.

Renewed mineral sector growth in turn allowed Masire's administration to respond to drought with an unprecedented expansion in infrastructural and human resource investment, fuelling an economic boom, in addition to emergency relief measures. In

The United Cricket Board of South Africa is actively involved in promoting cricket in Africa.

I take this opportunity of wishing H.E. Sir Ketumile Masire well on his retirement from active politics. May His Excellency and Magaone continue to enjoy good health and prosperity.

Ali Bacher

Dr. Ali Bacher
Managing Director
United Cricket Board

particular there was a rapid expansion of educational, health, and communications facilities. Botswana's success in coping with the 1980s drought was globally recognised in 1989 when President Masire received the African Prize for the sustainable end to hunger, in an awards ceremony in New York.

During the 1990s, the end of apartheid in South Africa and civil wars in Angola and Mozambique, led to a renewed emphasis on regional economic and social co-operation. As SADCC Chairman Masire played a leading role in the negotiations culminating in the 1992 Windhoek Declaration that transformed the association into SADC. In 1994 Masire, along with Mugabe and Mandela, mediated a political settlement in Lesotho, then on the brink of civil war. Continued economic growth, however, could not hide the fact that many Batswana remained impoverished through unemployment and underemployment in both the rural and urban areas. The need to attract increased investment in labour intensive manufacturing and service sector industries encouraged government to place additional emphasis on the promotion of labour productivity, market liberalisation, and initiatives such as the establishment of the Selibi-Phikwe export processing zone.

The need for a broader framework to promote development with social justice also led Masire to commission a President Task Group for a Long Term Vision, which commenced its work in August 1996. Just over a year later the Vision 2016 exercise had succeeded in producing a planning blueprint for the next two decades of Botswana's progress, a fitting culmination to the Masire era.

Privately, Masire has long been supportive of diverse initiatives by local NGOs. During the 1960s, while Vice President he found time to do voluntary evening teaching at Bontleng's Capital Continuation Classes. Currently he is an active patron of such local groups as the Botswana Society, Boy Scouts Association, Cheshire Foundation, Council for the Disabled, Okavango Wildlife Society, and the Olympic Movement in Botswana.

In addition to his knighthood, Masire is the recipient of numerous international honours, as well as the local Naledi ya Botswana. He has accumulated seven honorary doctorates.

Notwithstanding his lofty successes, Sir Ketumile has, at heart, remained obsessed with his first vocational love- agriculture. In 1994 he told this author:

"Agriculture is a major disappointment. As much as Botswana is a dry country, it has agricultural potential. The sceptics are wrong about Botswana's potential in agriculture. They are putting new wine on old bottles, not looking to new solutions. But definitely the old crops do not pay. The potential we have in agriculture is not exploited. Look at Tunisia, they produce grapes in places with pure sand, God-forsaken areas. Places more arid than Botswana are producing. If we planned successfully this country could thrive agriculturally".

"We need inspired people to get into farming and skilled people to supervise farms. The problem is that success in some fields has drained talent away from agriculture into other channels. From a manpower point of view it is the poorest of the poor. But just wait till I leave this post, I will demonstrate that agriculture can pay." Good luck and God bless Raterata, may you and MaGoane enjoy your long delayed honeymoon, as well as many further years of anticipated success as Botswana's Master Farmer and leading statesman.

President Masire trying on a Basotho blanket on his state visit to Lesotho

President Masire as Chancellor of the University of Botswana. Here he poses in his official robes. (Photo by Pula Productions)

Dr Masire being sworn in as President in 1994 after his party had won the general election. He was sworn in by the late Chief Justice Moleleki Mokama at Parliament Building

Representing Botswana at the O.A.U.

Cheshire Foundation circus performance September '97. H.E. greets one of the children

President Masire meeting with Prime Minister Mahatir Mohamed of Malaysia

President Masire (centre) with former United Nations Secretary General (right) Boutros Boutros Ghali

President Diouf of Senegal welcoming President Masire in Dakar, Senegal

President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe being welcomed by Masire at Sir Seretse Khama Airport in Gaborone

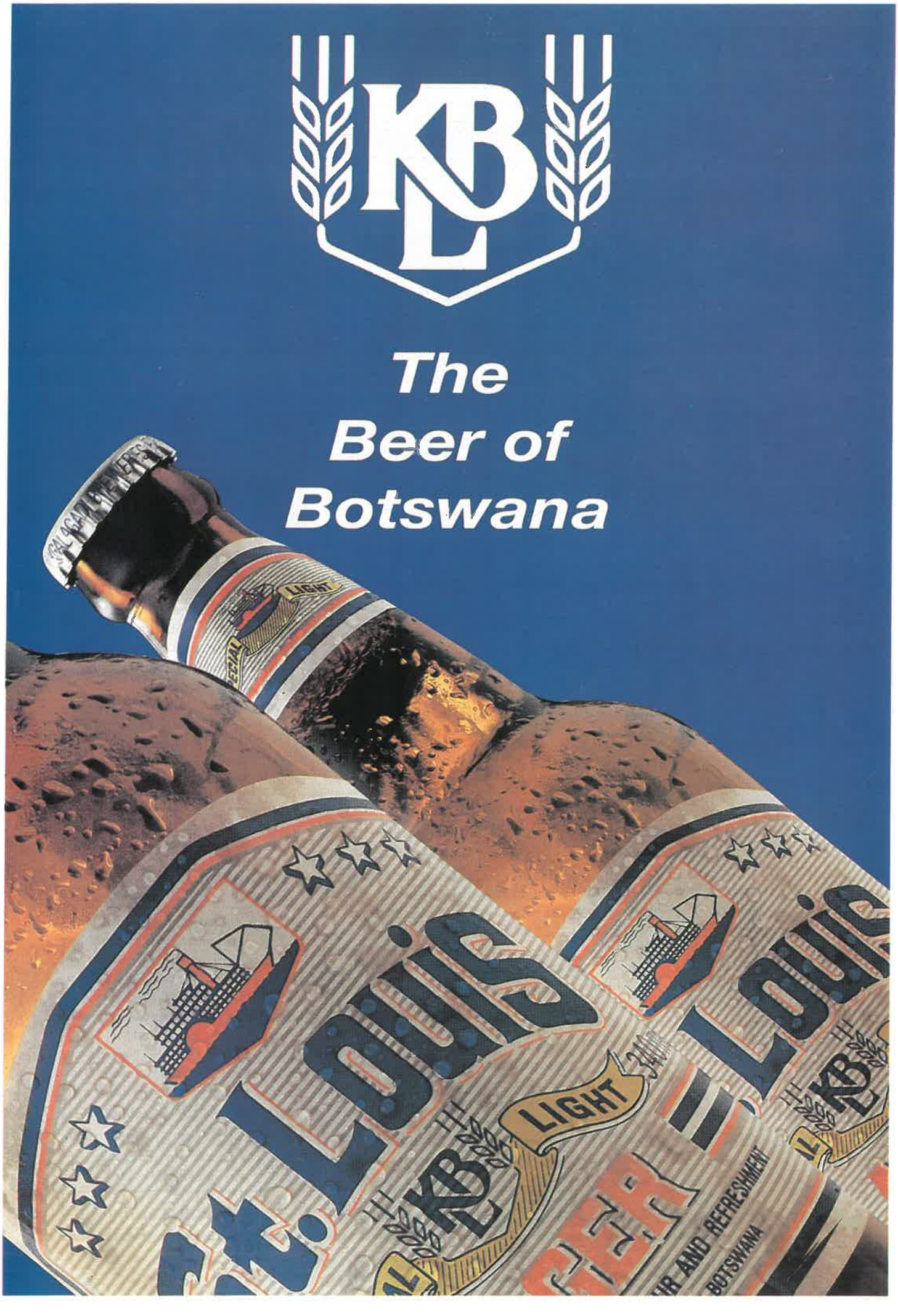
President Masire receiving the Order of Good Hope (Class 1 Grand Cross) from President Mandela of South Africa. Lady Masire looks on

President Masire (second from right - front row) at an O.A.U. meeting

President Masire in a state visit to Cuba met with President Fidel Castro of Cuba

President Masire inspecting a Guard of Honour in Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania. Masire was on a state visit.

Sir Ketumile Masire speaks at Farewell ceremony for him at National Stadium, March '98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You have to resign yourself to the inevitable: at the end of the day Nando's unique butterfly cut flame-grilled chicken, with your choice of lemon and herb, or mild or hot peri peri sauce is the best reward for a job well done.
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A TASTE OF PORTUGAL
HORIZON SAATCHI & SAATCHI

Statement on behalf of President dos Santos of Angola

His Excellency Quett Masire

President of Republic of Botswana

His Excellency Nelson Mandela

President of Republic South Africa and

President of SADC

Excellencies

Honourables heads of States

Your Majesties

Distinguished Heads of Government

Distinguished Members of Diplomatic Corp

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is for me a great honour, on behalf of His Excellency José Eduardo dos Santos, President of the Republic of Angola, on behalf of the Government and the Angolan people, to participate in this brilliant ceremony to honour the President of the Republic of Botswana, in this moment in which he is leaving the leadership of the Tswana people, with a feeling of having achieved his duties.

This honour is still greater, because this significant homage is associated with great sons of Africa, that for a long time are doing the best of their efforts, so that the understanding and the cooperation among our countries and peoples become more and more strong.

In the materialization of this noble aim, His Excellency President Quett Masire was a tireless and engaged worker who gave a valuable contribution, searching a stability and a better future for our peoples of the Region, first in the Front Line States and actually in the SADC.

Allow me, Excellencies, to be the interpreter of the most sincere gratitude of the Government and of the Angolan people to praise the very positive expression to this eminent and noble Statesman, who did his best through the exercising, the friendship and good neighbourhood between our Countries and to wish H.E. the President Quett Masire, health, success and prosperity in his future life.

Statement by His Majesty King Letsie III of Lesotho

Your Excellency the President of the Republic of Botswana,

Sir Ketumile Masire

Your Excellency, the President of the Republic of South Africa,

and the Chairman of SADC, President Nelson Mandela

Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the people and Government of Lesotho, and on my own behalf, I wish to convey my sincerest gratitude and appreciation to his excellency President Nelson Mandela - chairman of SADC for inviting me to this auspicious occasion of bidding farewell to his excellency President Sir Ketumile Masire, who, by all accounts, has been a loyal and faithful servant of the Republic of Botswana, its people, and of course of our Southern African community.

All of us in Lesotho are well aware that the Republic of Botswana, under the able and wise leadership of President Masire, has played a very important role in the establishment and development of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) as a vehicle of regional economic and political development and co-operation.

For this reason, I felt it my duty to accept the invitation to participate at this function of paying tribute to an outstanding leader and statesman of our time.

Your excellencies, permit me to recall what I said recently when Sir Ketumile Masire was in Lesotho. On that occasion I stated that Sir Ketumile's presidency has been the most difficult of past and possibly future presidents of Botswana. Sir Ketumile became Botswana's head of state - subsequently chairman of SADC - at the darkest hour in the region of Southern Africa, when aggression and destabilization emanating from apartheid South Africa was at its peak. At that time countries of the Southern African region were targets for political and economic blackmail, economic blockades and cross-border raids by apartheid South Africa. Those acts of aggression cost us dearly in terms of innocent human lives of our citizens, and brought much destruction to economic infrastructure.

Excellencies, despite the heavy losses occasioned by aggression and destabilisation, Botswana under the presidency of Sir Ketumile Masire did not bow down to pressure but continued to welcome and accommodate political refugees and provide support for the liberation movement in the region.

Above all, Botswana continued to play a pro-active role in the formation and consolidation of SADC. It was not by accident that Gaborone became the cradle and

headquarters of this important regional organisation.

Sir Ketumile Masire was elected the chairman of SADCC in 1981, as a mark of regional confidence in his country and in him personally. For sixteen years Sir Ketumile piloted the growth of SADC from a conference to a community we now see emerging. Thus, under his chairmanship, SADC has provided us with a vehicle for our collective prosperity and a framework within which our dream for regional economic integration is taking shape.

Excellencies, distinguished guests, I think it would be remiss of me if, on this auspicious occasion, I Failed to acknowledge the First Lady of Botswana, Lady Masire, as a great source of inspiration and a pillar of strength for all the laudable achievements that Sir Ketumile has made as the President of Botswana, an outstanding leader of our region and an international statesman.

While many of us may feel a sense of loss at Sir Ketumile's retirement, we, however, take solace in the knowledge that a statesman of his calibre, will for a long time to come, continue to make invaluable contributions, not only in the national affairs of Botswana but also in the affairs of our Southern Africa region.

Your excellencies, I am sure you will agree with me when I say that Lady Masire and President Masire deserve a rest - they have earned it. This is why the people and the government of Lesotho join me in wishing their excellencies a happy, prosperous and relaxing retirement.

Khotso! Pula!! Nala!!!

Statement by His Excellency the President Dr Bakili Muluzi of Malawi on the occasion of the Official Retirement of His Excellency Sir Ketumile Masire at Gaborone, Botswana on Wednesday 18th March, 1998

Mr Nelson Mandela, Chairman of SADC and President of the Republic of South Africa; Sir Ketumile Masire, President of the Republic of Botswana; Lady Masire; Your Majesty King Kswati III; Your Excellencies Heads of State and governments; members of Diplomatic Corps; The Executive Secretary of SADC; Ladies and Gentlemen.

I stand before you today with many mixed emotions. This is a most difficult occasion to say anything that can match the quality of the man we are gathered here to honour and say farewell to.

Perhaps farewell is too strong a word. The French have a better word, 'au revoir.'

My first puzzle is why a dashing, bright, happy, healthy young man such as Sir Ketumile Masire should wish to retire? He has so much youth in his heart!

My second puzzle is: I wonder how many cattle he really has to make him retire in such a great hurry and return to the cattle village?

I know I will never have an answer to this one, but I thought I should share the puzzle with you anyway.

But one thing I do know is this: If Sir Ketumile thinks that by going into retirement the rest of us will leave him alone, he is very mistaken indeed!

Africa needs men of stature and great statesmen like you. Africa will look for you and call upon your lifetime contacts, experience, diplomatic and presidential skill and wisdom to resolve her present and future conflicts.

SADC will knock on your door many, many times to seek counsel. There simply isn't a place to hide in Botswana, SADC or Africa for you Sir!

I wish to join those who have rightly paid glowing tributes to your distinguished service to this beautiful country, to our region, to Africa and beyond.

Ever since you and that celebrated son of Africa, the late Sir Seretse Khama founded and launched the Botswana Democratic party nearly 40 years ago, 36 to be precise, democracy has spread its wings on more African countries than you could ever have imagined.

Today we are gathered here in numbers that stand as living testimony of the measure of your achievement.

Your mellow wisdom and happy but magnanimous nature have been a source of inspiration to me and indeed to all of us. We should make your infectious laugh, a symbol of SADC.

I wish to convey my own congratulations and those of the people of the Republic of Malawi to you Sir Ketumile Masire on your premature retirement.

We wish you and Lady Masire a happy and enjoyable retirement.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, everything I have said about Sir Ketumile could also apply to Lady Masire. But in addition you have been a gracious mother of this beautiful nation of Botswana.

Your achievements, like your husband's have been monumental, but neither of you found it necessary to sing about them.

My wife and I congratulate you and wish you a happy and peaceful retirement.

Also, I wish to thank and pay tribute to the people of Botswana. You may not realise it now; but I think you are among the luckiest people on this continent.

Your well established tradition as a democratic, rational, peace-loving people has been a great source of inspiration to us all.

In a manner of speaking, this generation of the people of Botswana, has planted trees under whose cool shade many future generations will sit and enjoy.

We have come to associate this country, this City, with SADC, and rightly so, because of the outstanding service the people of Botswana, with Your Excellency as our first Chairman, have rendered to SADC.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, the fact that SADC has survived is a great tribute to you Sir Ketumile Masire and the people of Botswana. We salute you.

Please accept our deep sense of gratitude for your vision and courage.

I wish to thank the staff at the SADC Secretariat for the support you gave to Sir Ketumile Masire.

We have now arrived at a critical moment in the evolution of SADC, and it is an appropriate time to thank all our cooperating partners, notably the Nordic Countries and the European Union; for their welcome involvement in our efforts to bring about real economic growth and prosperity in our sub-region.

As always, my delegation and I have enjoyed the warm, abundant hospitality the people of Botswana have now become famous for. Thank you.

But my first puzzle still lingers on in my mind.

Why is he retiring at such a young tender age with so much excitement around? Has his grandchildren put a spell on him and are beckoning grandpa?

Has he not heard the saying that : Being a President of a country is like riding a tiger. You must keep riding or be swallowed.

I think Sir Ketumile is perhaps saying: fly off before the tiger gets hungry!

Once again, Sir Ketumile Masire, congratulations.

Mr Chairman, Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen; thank you for your kind attention, and God Bless.

Statement on behalf of His Excellency President Sam Nujoma of Namibia on the Occasion of a Special Tribute to His Excellency Sir Ketumile Masire Outgoing President of Botswana and Former Chairman of SADC

Comrade Chairman
Brother Heads of State and Government
Special Guests
Honourable Ministers
Ladies and Gentlemen
Comrades and Friends,

In 1980, President Ketumile Masire stepped into the shoes of a great statesman and historical personality, the late Sir Seretse Khama, who was the first President of the Republic of Botswana. Later, during the same year, President Masire also became the Chairman of the Southern African Development Coordinating Conference (SADCC).

The idea of the original SADCC was a brainchild of Sir Seretse Khama himself. It was he who, together with Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, sold this idea to the other leaders of the former Frontline States, at one of their frequent meetings. The rest is now history, a proud history of visionary leadership and steady socio-economic advancement.

President Masire has kept the faith of his predecessors and served his own people and our sub-region well. When he assumed the Chairmanship of the original Organisation in September 1980, the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC), the political and social situation in Southern Africa was explosive. It was characterised by anti-colonial wars, human suffering, destruction, and economic strangulation of the independent African States by apartheid South Africa.

But all of this did not weaken the will and determination of the regional leaders from going forward. Zimbabwe had just achieved independence and majority rule in 1980. The remaining National Liberation Movements, SWAPO and the ANC, continued to enjoy reliable rear-bases in and unwavering political support from the neighbouring countries. Nkrumah's wisdom expressed on the occasion of Ghana's independence in 1957 had indeed become the guiding light for Southern Africa.

At the same time, on the economic front, thought and action were fully deployed in serious and concerted efforts to de-link the regional economies from the apartheid state. It was not easy. But there was a firm conviction that the worst thing could happen was not to do anything at all.

In 1992, two years after Namibia's independence, SADCC held its historic Summit

in Windhoek. A delegation of the soon-to-be democratic South Africa was also represented. It was at that Summit that the SADC Treaty and the Windhoek Declaration were adopted. The old SADCC was transformed into the present Southern African Development Community (SADC). The Treaty and the Declaration set the legal framework for cooperation and integration as well as a vision for the future of our sub-region. We were then only ten States but today we boast of a fourteen-member strong Community representing a huge market of almost 190 million citizens, workers and consumers.

President Masire has actively participated in these momentous developments both as the President of the Republic of Botswana and particularly and Chairman of SADC which is acclaimed worldwide as an effective enterprise of self-reliance and regional solidarity. The liberation of the region and political stability have been achieved. Today, development and human security represent the main challenges. I believe that by employing the same will, determination and unity of purpose and action which guided us so far we can ensure many more successes ahead of our sub-region.

It is with all these achievements and rededication in mind that we are gathered here in Gaborone, the Headquarters of SADC to pay a well-deserved tribute to President Masire before his retirement at the end of this month. His personal contribution towards the growth, maturity and success of SADC is outstanding and will withstand the test of time. That he has been the longest serving Chairman of SADC is in itself a shining tribute to his leadership.

In conclusion, I would like to say to my Brother that your retirement as President of Botswana and as Chairman of SADC should not mean a secluded life at the cattle-post. Your immense wisdom and experience will most certainly still continue to be required by all our countries and peoples and, no less, by the rest of Africa and the world at large.

You should take some time out for rest and reflection. But do not think of retiring from duty and service to Africa and humanity.

Good luck and warm congratulations.

I thank you.

Statement of Deputy President of South Africa Thabo Mbeki at the SADC Farewell Function for President Ketumile Masire : Gaborone, March 18, 1998

Master of Ceremonies
Your Excellency President Masire and Mrs Masire
Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government
Ambassadors and High Commissioners
Distinguished Participants
Citizens of the Republic of Botswana

Friends, comrades, ladies and gentlemen

First of all, I would like to apologise for the inability of our President, Nelson Mandela, to be present at this moving ceremony when our region has convened to wish President Masire good rest after the many years he has spent in the service of the people both of Botswana and Southern Africa as a whole.

As you are aware, tomorrow, President Mandela will be in court, consequent to the direction given by one of our Judges that he must appear before the Judge, who is considering a matter relating to the appointment of a Judicial Commission to inquire into affairs related to the sport of rugby.

Accordingly, President Mandela has had to devote the necessary amount of time and effort to this matter and this, most unfortunately, has kept him away from our midst tonight.

Dr Buthelezi and I are here tonight to convey to you, President Masire and Mrs Masire, President Mandela's best wishes as well as our own, those of the rest of our Government and the people of our country as a whole, as you pass on the baton to younger generation of the leaders of the people of Botswana.

Mr President :

You acceded to the Presidency of the Republic of Botswana soon after the independence of Zimbabwe. During that Presidency, you had occasion to usher in the liberation of the peoples of Namibia and South Africa, as well as the era of peace for the peoples of Mozambique and Angola.

It would have been sufficient for anybody to have participated as one of the principal architects of only one of these historic victories to earn the title - "the Lion of Africa".

To have been at the centre of the processes which led to the consummation of all four of these unrepeatable successes speaks to the calibre of leadership with which our region and continent has been blessed, which you, Mr President, both personify and symbolise.

Mr President :

We must speak in similar terms about your great contribution to the establishment and development of SADC.

This important instrument for regional cooperation must surely be among the great products of the spirit of solidarity and the recognition of a shared destiny which will forever inform the future of our peoples.

We thank you Mr President that you and the Late President Sir Seretse Khama, had the foresight and tenacity to ensure that the natural cooperation among our peoples is given greater force and direction through the establishment of the Development Community.

Mr President :

We have to build on what has been achieved on what you have bequeathed to us. In any case, life and the demands of the masses of our people will not allow us to stand still.

In our languages we "indlela ibuzwa Kwabaphambili" - as those who have already travelled the road to show you the way.

Even as you rest, we will come to you, Mr President, to request you to show us the way, because your wisdom and experience will forever remain a source on which, we will insist, we must continue to reply as we travel along the road of development, peace and friendship among our peoples.

Mr President, we wish you and our mother an enjoyable working rest.

Thank you

Statement By His Majesty King Mswati III of Swaziland at the Banquet in Honour of His Excellency President Sir Ketumile Masire Wednesday, 18 March 1998 in Gaborone

Your Excellency, President Masire
Your Majesty King Letsie III
Your Excellencies Heads of State
Excellencies
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am delighted to have this opportunity to present her majesty the Indlovukazi, the Government and the whole Swazi nation, as we honour your excellency President Masire for the work you have done for the Batswana people and, of particular relevance for the Kingdom of Eswatini, for all that you have accomplished on behalf of SADC.

We are conscious of the fact that whilst you have served SADC with dedication since your accession to the demanding office of the presidency. You have equally displayed inspiring leadership to the Batswana nation; and this has won you great respect and love of your own people. Through your untiring efforts and your ability to win friends abroad, Botswana has economically moved to greater heights assured of national peace and stability which are a sure foundation for national development.

In conjunction with other far-sighted leaders in the region, President Masire understood that our future economic stability and ability to compete with the rest of the world, would depend on harmonizing our policies towards integrating our economies. His dream was to create a close family of Southern Africa nations gaining strength through unity.

The success of SADC today owes an enormous amount to the leadership of President Masire who managed to turn that dream into reality. Present and future generations of Southern Africans can have real hope for economic prosperity and history will show clearly how great a role President Masire played in making that possible.

It also goes to your credit Mr President that whilst you were SADC chairman, the rest of Southern Africa became free at last : thus consolidating the base for economic emancipation of our region.

Also one of sadness, for tonight we mark the departure from the highest political stage of one of Africa's great sons.

Of course we all respect your excellency's decision to step down from high office; but we all hope and pray that your vast experience, and inspiring leadership will

always be available for the benefit of our Southern African region. This you could do, your excellency, as either a senior resource person or consultant - free of charge or at nominal rates.

On a personal note, I have been deeply grateful to your excellency for the advice and guidance you have given me over the years, and for the close relationship we have shared.

The Kingdom of Eswatini recognizes the huge contribution you have made towards our development, and we wish you a happy, healthy retirement.

We hope to see you as a regular visitor to the Kingdom where you will always be welcomed as a true friend.

Finally Mr President, you may rest assured that we are justifiably proud of you. You have fought a good fight. You have run the race; and now a crown awaits you. Your voluntary retirement from politics and statecraft management - indeed rare in mother Africa - is an example worth emulating.

Thank you and may god bless us all.

Statement by the President of the Republic of Zambia, Mr Frederick J T Chiluba, at a Special Farewell Dinner in Honour of his Excellency Sir Ketumile Masire, President of the Republic of Botswana and Former Chairman of SADC : 18th March 1998 - Gaborone, Botswana

Your Excellency Sir Ketumile Masire, President of the Republic of Botswana
Your Excellency President Nelson Mandela of the Republic of South Africa and Chairman of SADC,
Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government,
Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Distinguished Guests;
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Allow me to extend my sincere appreciation, your excellency and my dear brother, President Masire, of this joyous, historical and emotional event. I particularly wish to acknowledge the kind gesture you have shown to us all by according us this privilege to share with you this wonderful lifetime experience.

Your excellency, this occasion offers us an excellent opportunity to deepen the long standing personal friendship existing among us : the friendship that the peoples of Southern Africa have cherished since time immemorial. It is also a befitting moment of me to salute, your excellency, the government and people of the Republic of Botswana for the outstanding commitment and dedication to the cause of our region.

I wish to reassure, your excellency, that my Government and the people of Zambia remain equally committed to the full realisation of the dreams that the region has envisaged. We will continue to expend our energies on activities intended to accomplish the tasks that the region has set itself, to do.

The enormous task of integrating our region for the purpose of realising our collective vision of attaining sustainable economic growth and development in the SADC region requires our continued joint efforts. This task would have been more burdensome had it not been for your resolute and diligent leadership of our organisation from its inception in 1980 to 1996.

SADC was borne against a background of a huge dark political cloud that hang over Southern Africa. It was your unique guidance and leadership skills that enabled us to prevail over the many uncertainties associated with the political conditions then obtaining in this region.

Together, we forged ahead despite the many setbacks SADC suffered; and, today, we stand here as a proud people. We were on a right course for the liberation of the sub-continent and we know that we are on the right course to integration. Our organisation, nurtured through those hard and trying moments in the history of

liberation, has now been firmly launched on an unswerving and irreversible path of political, economic and social integration.

Indeed, the process of building a community can take some time. The route to full integration is fraught with many barriers, and may be frustrated at times but cannot be reversed. Our region has demonstrated the necessary commitment and resolve to realise this cause out of our own conviction that the full potential of driving our economies to higher heights of prosperity can only be exploited through regional integration : a key vehicle that compels economies, large and small, to move closer to each other and spurred on by economic motives for the benefit of their own peoples.

Your excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, our region continues to take the necessary measures intended to ensure that we adapt to the changing regional and international environments.

These measures will, no doubt, allow us to adequately face the challenges of our times and those that lie ahead.

We have successfully implemented important regional programmes in many sectors of our economies. I do not need to remind you excellencies that SADC has seen the successful development of important sectoral protocols aimed at providing the necessary legal framework for our cherished cooperation. Many other important programmes are on course. This effort will ultimately yield the required fruits that will improve the living conditions of the majority of the people of the region.

Your excellencies, let me, once again, salute the government and people of the Republic of Botswana for the magnanimity they have shown to us all during your term of office as chairman of SADC. Without their support, the organisation would not have recorded the many successes we can point to today. This is the generosity that we will always admire.

Your regional efforts would have been impaired without the kind consideration, understanding, patience and support that the people of your great country rendered your excellency in your pursuit of regional ideals.

Indeed, as you take leave of the office of President of the Republic of Botswana, we take comfort in the full trust that you will always avail us the excellent brotherly guidance that we are all now accustomed to. We will not hesitate to knock on your door from time to time in search of your wisdom on many issues that concern the people of this region.

Your excellency, for now, I can only wish you well.

I thank you.

Tribute to H.E. President Sir Ketumile Masire by H.E. The President, Comrade R.G. Mugabe of Zimbabwe, Wednesday, 18 March 1998

Your Excellency President Sir Ketumile Masire and Lady Masire
Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government
Your Excellency, the Executive Secretary of SADC
Honourable Ministers
Your Excellencies, High Commissioners and Ambassadors and other Plenipotentiaries
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen
Comrades and Friends

Mr President, it is indeed a great honour and privilege for me and members of my delegation to be here to bid you farewell.

Our hearts are palpitating with a mixture of sadness and excitement. We are sad because you are leaving colleagues, brothers, friends and a people who hold you very high esteem and a region that will miss you but not forget your contributions. At the same time, we are excited that you have had a very wonderful political career and you are about to explore what the land offers to farmers.

Indeed Mr President, you are leaving behind a positive legacy not only in Botswana and the region but the world over. You have been and you will remain a true and dedicated elder statesman.

When we reflect, we see in you a leader who has contributed immensely to both the development and welfare of the entire region.

Zimbabwe has had very close relations with you in person and your country. We are confident that you are leaving office after having laid a very solid basis on which we can continue to expand these relations. All but a few bilateral agreements are outstanding. Politically we have always shared the same pedestal with the same vision.

Allow me Mr President to add that the Government and the people of Zimbabwe salute you and do acknowledge your heroic contributions to the just struggles that were waged in the region. We are sad that you are leaving office but we are proud of your achievements.

We salute you and do acknowledge your 15-year leadership at the helm of the SADC.

Dear Colleague, you have always been steadfast on matters of principle. You steered the SADC during extremely difficult and trying times. We owe the success of SADC during those tyring moments to your steadfastness and wise and principled

leadership. All of us who will follow your footsteps.

Mr President, your efforts towards the political, economic and social development of the region were not in vain. The region registered tremendous gains. We must therefore consolidate those gains and build new bridges to foster regional integration. The region of Southern Africa constitutes a nucleus for political and economic hope in the 21st century. This is a region that has as its core principle - "Partnership for economic growth and opportunities".

Zimbabwe will continue to fully and closely work with your successor, Mr Festus Mogae, on all bilateral and regional matters. On other matters of international concern, we will continue to consult in order to preserve the best interests of the region. We will no doubt share the same common approach, same solidarity and resilience in order to face the new challenges brought about by globalization. We share the same destiny. We are all pressed by crippling debt burden, diminishing official development assistance, lack of significant flows of foreign direct investment and one sided international terms of trade and undue political and economic pressures from some quarters.

You transformed Botswana from being one of the poorest nation states to become one of the most prosperous nations. Within three decades there is super infrastructure where there was none. The majority now have access to schools, clinics and hospitals. I also take note that there is expansion of telecommunication services.

Batswana now busk in relative comfort and pride and shielded by a profound and stable political and economic environment. Indeed Botswana has become the envy of many.

My brother and dear colleague, Sir Ketumile Masire and Lady Masire, the Government and people of Zimbabwe wish you all the best in your retirement. You will be most welcome visitors in Zimbabwe, your second home. This will be the first time ever to visit without dictated schedules and programmes as were the cases when you and official and state visits.

With these few words, Mr President and Madam I take this opportunity to say we will all miss you Tsamaya sentle (Go well).

Tsamaya ka pula

Pula

Extracts from

Statement by Dr Kaire Mbuende
Executive Secretary of SADC
On the Occasion of
The Farewell Dinner in Honour of
His Excellency President Sir Ketumile Masire
18th March, 1998
Gaborone, Botswana

Your Excellency, the Guest of Honour, President Sir Ketumile Masire and Lady Masire
Your Majesty King Mswati III of the Kingdom of Swaziland and Queen Lamotsa
Your Majesty King Letsie III of the Kingdom of Lesotho
Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government and Your Dear Spouses
Honourable Ministers
Members of the Diplomatic Corps
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is with a great sense of honour and profound humility that I welcome Your Majesties and your Excellencies to the SADC farewell dinner hosted in honour of His Excellency the President of the Republic of Botswana, Sir Ketumile Masire, the rock foundation on which SADC has been built.

He was Chairman of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) from 1980 to 1996 when he handed over the chairmanship to President Nelson Mandela of South Africa. In this regard I have had the unique privilege of working very closely with President Masire.

He has been both a mentor and guide and has always been available when I needed him most. When I thought I was alone in very difficult situations he was there to give fatherly advise and guidance. In fact, when we look backward at the track record of SADC, we are indeed proud to have had President Masire at the helm of our Organisation for nearly sixteen years. Throughout these years his steadfast leadership has helped consolidate SADC into a powerful regional Organisation. He has also ensured that we remain faithful to the Founding Fathers' wish that SADC should follow a pragmatic step by step approach in its evolution and should also actively involve the people of the region in the process of regional cooperation and integration.

Your Majesties, Excellencies

It is largely through the tireless efforts of President Masire that SADC has now attained its place of honour in the African continent and the world at large. We are now considered the most progressive and powerful economic block in Sub-Saharan

Africa with a total population of about 180 million and a combined GDP of US$170 billion. Our annual growth rate has been increasing steadily through our concerted and focused agenda on developmental issues and is now around 4.5%.

Our goal is to reach a rate of growth above 7% that will be sufficient to make a dent on poverty and increase our standard of living.

Indeed we are moving from strength to strength and as President Masire pointed out in one of his landmark speeches "our region has become a haven of democracy and a beacon of hope in Africa's hazardous road to economic development and social advancement".

Your Majesties, Your Excellencies

Allow me at this juncture to express on behalf of the entire SADC Secretariat, the SADC Institutions and indeed on my own personal behalf our profound gratitude to His Excellency Sir Ketumile Masire, the outgoing President of the Republic of Botswana and former Chairman of SADC for his exemplary devotion, leadership and vision which have contributed to usher SADC into a vibrant and operational economic block. It is our hope that he will continue to advise us as we continue to build on the solid foundation which he has laid for SADC.

Your Majesties and Excellencies

May I with your permission, present to His Excellency a token of our appreciation for the leadership and guidance that he has provided to us over the years. We wish you Sir, good health and success in your endeavours.

I thank you for your attention.

Statement by His Excellency Sir Ketumile Masire President of the Republic of Botswana at a dinner hosted in His Honour by Their Excellencies the Heads of State and the Government of Southern African Development Community 18 March 1998

Your Excellency President Joaquim Alberto Chissano of the Republic of Mozambique and Deputy Chairman of SADC,

Your Majesties,
Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government,
The Honourable, Mr Thabo Mbeki, Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa,
Honourable President of the Angolan Parliament,
Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly and Mrs Nwako,
Your Honour the Vice President of the Republic of Botswana and Mrs Mogae,
Honourable Chief Justice and Mrs Nganunu
Honourable Ministers,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Mr Chairman,

When President Nelson Mandela informed me that you have unanimously agreed to organise this event, I was highly moved by the kind gesture of friendship and goodwill. Today, I am deeply touched and humbled by the honour you have bestowed upon me. That you left your busy schedules to be with us tonight is a clear demonstration of your strong friendship and solidarity with the people of Botswana.

On behalf of the Government and people of Botswana, and on behalf of my family and myself, I wish to express my profound gratitude to you individually and collectively, for the wonderful words you said about me and my country.

Mr Chairman,

In two weeks time, the people of Botswana will bear witness to a peaceful transfer of power. After 33 years in public office, first as Vice-President and Minister of Finance and Development Planning, I have decided to retire from the position of President of the Republic of Botswana. I did so because I have hope and confidence in the future of this country.

I believe I have done my best to contribute to nation-building and the socio-economic development of Botswana. I am fully satisfied that there are men and women in this country who are capable of taking over the ship of state and steering it meticulously to the next millennium.

In this respect, I am delighted that when I relinquish my duties as President, I will pass the baton of leadership to His Honour Mr Festus Gontebanye Mogae, a man of formidable intellectual capacity and a proven track record in the management of public affairs.

I am confident that he will enjoy the same amount of friendship and support I could always count on from you colleagues, and that he too, will do everything he can to be a constructive team player in efforts to improve the lot of the people of our region.

Mr Chairman,

If I have hope and confidence in the future of Botswana, it is because Botswana is a member of a family of nations which have already demonstrated their determination to jointly take the destiny of their region in their own hands. About eighteen years ago, no one could have foretold the future of Southern Africa with any degree of certainty.

South Africa was in the clutches of apartheid, Namibia was under illegal occupation, a civil war was raging on in Angola and a debilitating destabilisation campaign was going on in Mozambique.

It was during this difficult and trying period that the leaders of the sub-region had a vision of a united Southern Africa, a region at peace and engaged in economic co-operation and regional integration. Their determination and commitment to the establishment of a peaceful and prosperous future defied expression.

Mr Chairman,

I shall forever be grateful for the opportunity and privilege I had in 1979 to lead a world wide mission to canvass support for the creation of the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC).

There were those who ridiculed the SADCC as a club of poor countries whose raison d'être was to oppose apartheid. They therefore believed that as soon as apartheid was dismantled, the organisation would collapse. In short, there were far too many imponderables.

Mr Chairman,

What happened on the 1st April 1980 when the Heads of State or Government of the independent states of Southern Africa adopted the Declaration, Southern Africa : Towards Economic Liberation, is matter of public record. Suffice it to say, a major battle had been won, Southern Africa had taken a major first step in laying the foundation for future economic co-operation thanks to those who stood by us. They were friends indeed because at the time what we needed most was political, diplomatic and moral support.

We needed to cross the psychological barrier, to gain the acceptance that our cause

was just and therefore our programme and projects deserved funding. Since then, SADC has never looked back!

Mr Chairman,

I had the privilege of being Chairman of our sub-regional organisation for sixteen years. These were not easy years, and yet they were also years of hope and opportunities. I am grateful for the friendship, support and understanding I received from you during my stewardship. As I leave office, I am delighted that Southern Africa has firmly put itself on the world map. The transformation from the Co-ordination Conference to the Community has further strengthened the credentials of our sub-regional organisation.

The independence of Namibia, the cessation of the civil war in Angola, the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa and the end of destabilisation in Mozambique opened a new chapter in the region's co-operation efforts.

Among other things these developments were no doubt a vindication of the vision of our founding fathers, that is, a Southern Africa at peace with itself, moving towards harnessing all its resources for the common good of its people. It laid to rest, once and for all, the debate on the part of skeptics about the nature and direction of regional co-operation in Southern Africa. Mr Chairman, let no one doubt, SADC is on the move.

Having laid the foundation, we leave it to future generations to fulfil our dream for a better future for all.

Mr Chairman,

In conclusion, allow me to state that, if ever there was an impression that SADC is only concerned with economic co-operation and regional integration, today's event has clearly shown that SADC also has a personal and human touch. Where else did Heads of State and Government meet to break bread in order to bid farewell to one of their own? And now, the moment of farewell. But one cannot bid farewell to a part of himself.

After so many years of working closely together in the management of the affairs of our sub-region and sharing both difficult and happy moments, you have become part of my life - and so my dear brothers and colleagues, it gives me great pleasure to say to you, so long!!!

I thank you.

Present at the SADC Dinner in honour of Sir Ketumile Masire were from left to right (standing) Dr Kaire Mbuende - Executive Secretary SADC, Mr A Kundasamy - High Commissioner of Mauritius, Mr R V de Almeida - President of Parliament - Angola, President Muluzi of Malawi, President Mkapa of Tanzania, Deputy President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, Mr H Geingob - Prime Minister of Namibia, Mr Festus Mogae - Vice President of Botswana.
(seated from left to right) President Mugabe of Zimbabwe, King Mswati III of Swaziland, Sir Ketumile Masire - President of Botswana, President Chissano of Mozambique, King Letsie III of Lesotho, President Chiluba of Zambia

President Masire planting a tree at SADC House as a token of good relationship that prevailed during his period as both the Chairman of SADC and Head of Botswana Government

President Masire unveiling a plaque at renovated SADC Headquarters. Looking on is SADC Executive Secretary Dr. Kaire Mbuende

President Masire at dinner given in his honour by SADC Heads of State. March '98 (Photo by Pula Productions)

President Masire chatting with Chief Gatsha Buthelezi who is the leader of Inkatha Freedom Party and Minister of Home Affairs for South Africa

President Masire receives a gift from the people of Mozambique presented by President Chissano. Looking on is Deputy President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki (seated far left)

President Masire signing a guest book at SADC Headquarters in Gaborone. Heads of State later hosted Masire to a dinner to bid him farewell on his retirement. Looking on is Dr. Kaire Mbuende Executive Secretary of SADC (right)

Remarks by President Bill Clinton
United States of America
Lawn of State House
Gaborone, Botswana

THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you very much. Mr Foreign Minister, President Masire, Lady Obebile, Vice President Mogae, Mrs Mogae, and all the other people who have previously been recognised by a previous speaker. I am glad to be here and to receive such a warm welcome and a standing ovation from all of you.

For Hillary and for me, this has been an extraordinary trip for our entire American Delegation. It has taken us from Africa's Western rim to its Southern shore; from its smallest villages to its most modern cities; from its youngest democracy, South Africa, to its oldest, Botswana.

We have seen the promise of a new Africa whose roots are deep here in your soil, for you have been an inspiration to all who cherish freedom. At your independence three decades ago, Botswana was among the poorest countries on Earth, with only two miles of paved roads and one public secondary school. Today you have a vibrant economy, a network of major highways, almost full enrollment in primary schools, and the longest average lifespan in sub-Saharan Africa. Congratulations to all of you.

Africa needs more Botswanas, and America is determined to support all those who would follow your lead. Today I'm pleased to announce our intent to establish Radio Democracy for Africa, a Voice of America service aimed directly at encouraging progress toward freedom and democracy, respect for human rights, and an independent and objective media.

The Congressman Royce in particular for his leadership in promoting this program, as well as the other members of our congressional delegation. Botswana's success was built by its people and by the dedicated leaders they chose. President Masire, I am deeply honoured to be among those here as you leave your distinguished tenure. As Vice President and Finance Minister, you sparked the engine of an economic miracle by establishing the first joint ventures for mining diamonds. You created Botswana's sound fiscal and monetary regimes. You negotiated Botswana's access to European markets. You earned the trust of your fellow citizens.

As President, you've ensured that human rights and the rule of law could make their home in Botswana. Your stand against apartheid and your support of the ANC gave hope to all who yearned for dignity and equality in South Africa. You have been a leader in conserving wildlife. You've sent your troops on missions of peace in Somalia,

Rwanda and Mozambique. And as a founding member and host to the SADC Secretariat, you have helped bring countries in this region closer together and create new opportunities for your people.

Now, as you step down from public office after 18 years of leadership, you're ensuring the peaceful transfer of power that has come to characterise this land.

Mr President, on behalf of all Americans, I salute you and your achievements. I would say you have earned the right to go back to your cattle ranch.

The United States has been very proud to support Botswana's progress. Botswana's success led to the bittersweet closing of our AID and Peace Corps programs. But though these development programs have finished, their legacy endures. Lady Obebile, I know you taught many Peace Corps volunteers their first words of Setswana. You helped to ensure that countless young Americans came home with a lifelong love for your country and this continent.

Now we're building on that spirit of co-operation to renew our partnership for the future, based on common values, common vision and mutual respect. Together we can help all men and women in Africa secure the freedom that is their birthright. We can deepen our investment in trade and bring the prosperity to all citizens. We can work together to deter conflicts before they explode into crises. And together, we can protect this fragile Earth for future generations.

Visitors to Botswana will never forget the beauty of your environment. Tomorrow Hillary and I will have the great pleasure of visiting Chobe ourselves. You have been blessed with abundant resources, but none of those is more precious than your people. Because of them, the future looks bright for Botswana and for the region as well.

So, Mr President, on behalf of all Americans, thank you again for the extraordinary example you and the people of Botswana have set. I wish you all the best. America is proud to be Botswana's partner and friend. Thank you very much.

Statement by His Excellency Sir Ketumile Masire President of the Republic of Botswana at a reception in honour of the President of the United States of America and the First Lady Mrs Hillary Rodham Clinton State House - Gaborone Sunday 29 March 1998

It is a rare but exhilarating honour for me and for the Government of Botswana to welcome you, Mr President, the First Lady and your entire distinguished delegation to Botswana. This is truly an historic occasion, for you are the first sitting President of the United States of America to visit our country, and only the second to visit Africa.

Your visit to Botswana and other African countries demonstrates, in no small measure, your Administration's commitment to African development. We recall with gratitude the first White House conference on Africa which you hosted very early in your Presidency. We thank the Government and the people of the United States of America for having given substance to that commitment.

Mr President,

During your Administration, Botswana hosted several of your country's dignitaries including Vice President Al Gore, the late Ron Brown and, more recently the Presidential Mission on Economic Co-operation to Africa led by Congressman Charles Rangel whom I am delighted to see here today.

Each visit has given rise to memoranda and agreements aimed at the improvement of the quality of the lives of our people. In particular, I would mention the memorandum of understanding between USAID and the Southern African Development Community (SADC); the memorandum of understanding between the United States Department of Commerce and SADC and the Investment Incentive Agreement between the Overseas Private Investment Corporation and Botswana.

Mr President,

At independence in 1966, Botswana adopted a constitution that embodied not only the long democratic traditions of our Kgotla system but also certain features drawn from the other great democracies of the world including the United States of America.

I therefore express our collective gratitude for the recognition of the fact by the U.S. House of Representatives by adopting a resolution commending democracy in Botswana. I thank you for this manifestation of trust and confidence in our political

dealings. I can assure you, Mr President, that the democratic tradition will continue to be respected and cherished by succeeding leaders of this country.

Relations between Botswana and the United States of America are excellent. Co-operation between our countries has been expressed at bilateral, regional and international levels. It is not my intention to enumerate all the projects by which Botswana has benefited and continues to benefit from the United States financial assistance. They are many and varied. That I have decided to comment on only a few is not intended to downgrade the value and importance of others.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) played a pivotal role in providing for the development of our infrastructure such as roads, water supplies, health and educational facilities. Experts have been provided in various fields to assist in the development of human resources. In this connection we are happy now to be the hosts of the USAID Regional Centre for Southern Africa.

The Peace Corps Volunteer programme brought young American teachers, nurses and other skilled personnel who were deployed throughout the country. They brought the necessary technical expertise and they also enriched our culture, learned, appreciated and contributed in resolving the many development problems we had.

We appreciated that the Botswana Peace Corps programme was phased out because there are now more deserving countries elsewhere in the world. Happily a number of volunteers have stayed on to make their lives in Botswana, contributing to our own bio-diversity as a nation. Allow me Mr President to express the appreciation of my Government and people for their dedicated service.

The U.S. Ambassador's Self Help Fund has assisted small rural communities and funded projects to assist women and other disadvantaged sections of our society. This is in line with my Government's emphasis on the creation of employment in rural areas. We cannot thank enough the United States Ambassador to Botswana, Ambassador Krueger and his predecessors for their sympathetic understanding of our concerns.

Many Botswana professionals have trained at American universities under United States scholarships. Many continue their studies at various colleges in engineering, medicine and computer sciences. They will return to strengthen our capacity in these fields bringing with them an understanding of the American way which underlies the most successful economy of the 20th century.

We thank the United States for the economic initiatives now in place such as the Southern African Enterprise Development Fund and the Institute of Southern Africa. We appreciate your support for the African growth and opportunity Bill which was passed by the House of Representatives recently.

This act, Mr President, will facilitate the industrialisation of our economies and the

transfer of essential technology. I and my Government applaud the objective of creating the opportunity for African countries to become participants in the global economy by accessing the world's largest market. We are hopeful that the US Senate will need no persuading to approve what many of us have come to regard as America's solemn bond to Africa.

Mr President,

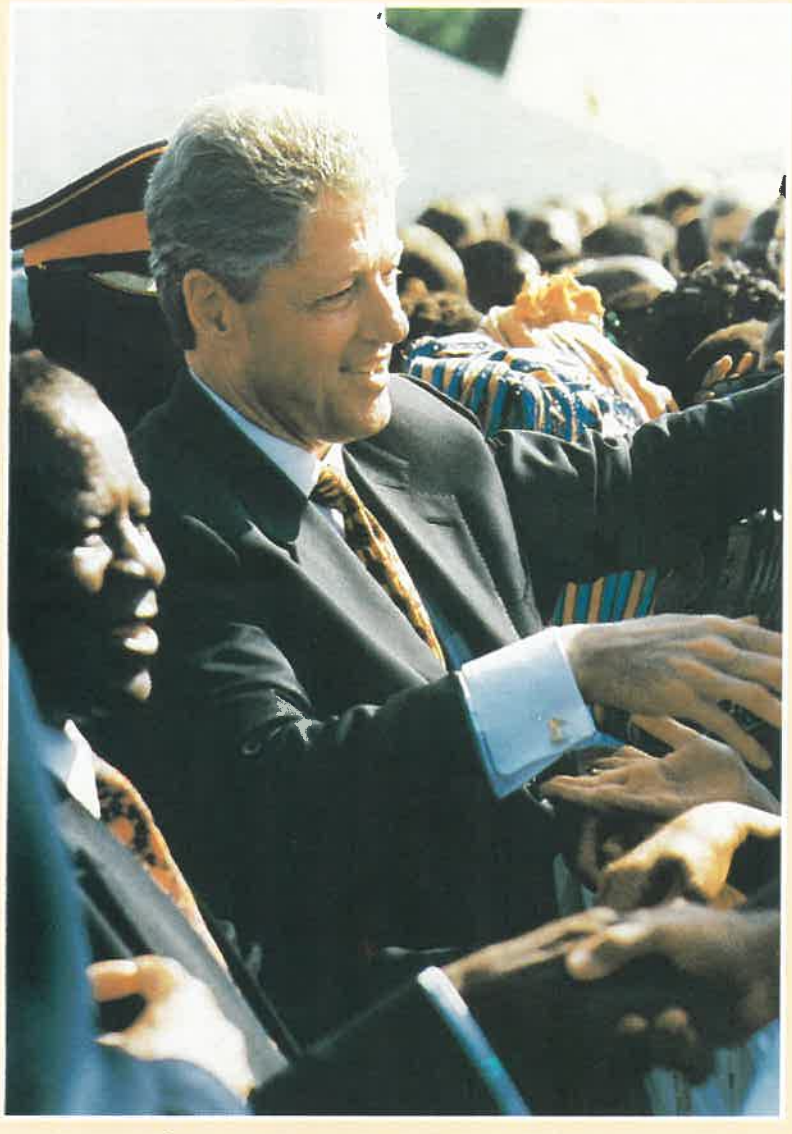
Mineral products have, for a number of years been the mainstay of our economic success story. For our Eighth National Development Plan my Government intends to focus on Sustainable Economic Diversification. Our objective is to promote non-traditional export products, to create new employment avenues and to train our people to attain international competitiveness. The United States can assist Botswana to join the challenges through equity education and training and through investment, and equal participation.

We recognise our responsibility for providing an enabling environment, for the security of foreign investment, for good human, social industrial relations and for political stability and democratic governance. We shall endeavour always to meet our obligations in this regard.

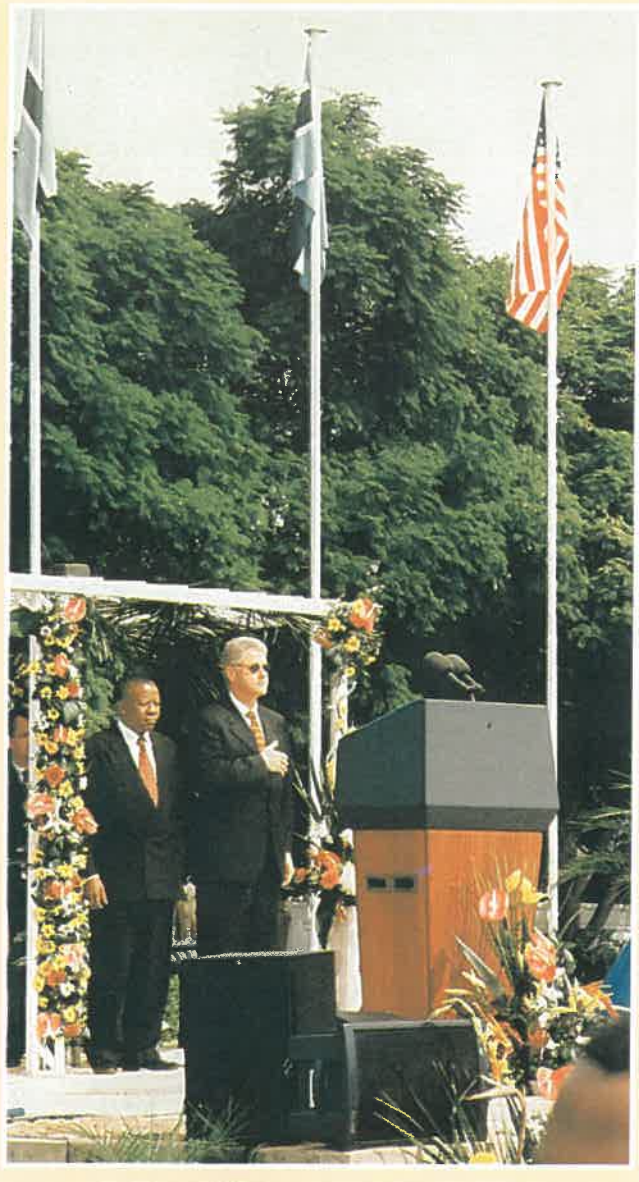
Mr President,

Looking beyond our borders we thank the United States for its active role in helping to consolidate the independence of Namibia and for supporting the normalisation of the political process in Mozambique. It is a matter of grave concern for the entire region that the situation in Angola continues to defy the endeavours of the international community for a negotiated settlement. Botswana, together with other States in the region, will continue to strive for the attainment of peace in Angola.

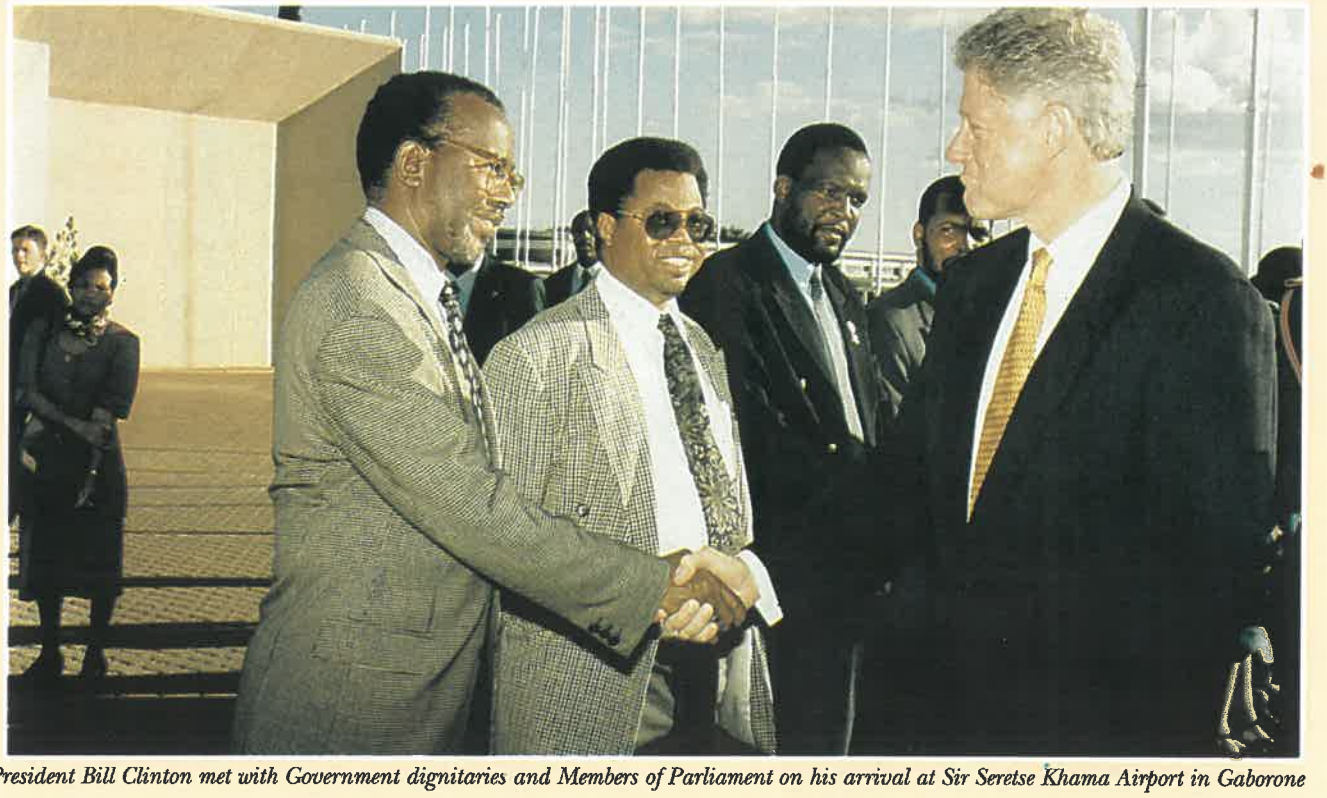
I thank you!



President Bill Clinton greets the crowd at State House, Gaborone at a reception in his honour given by President Masire



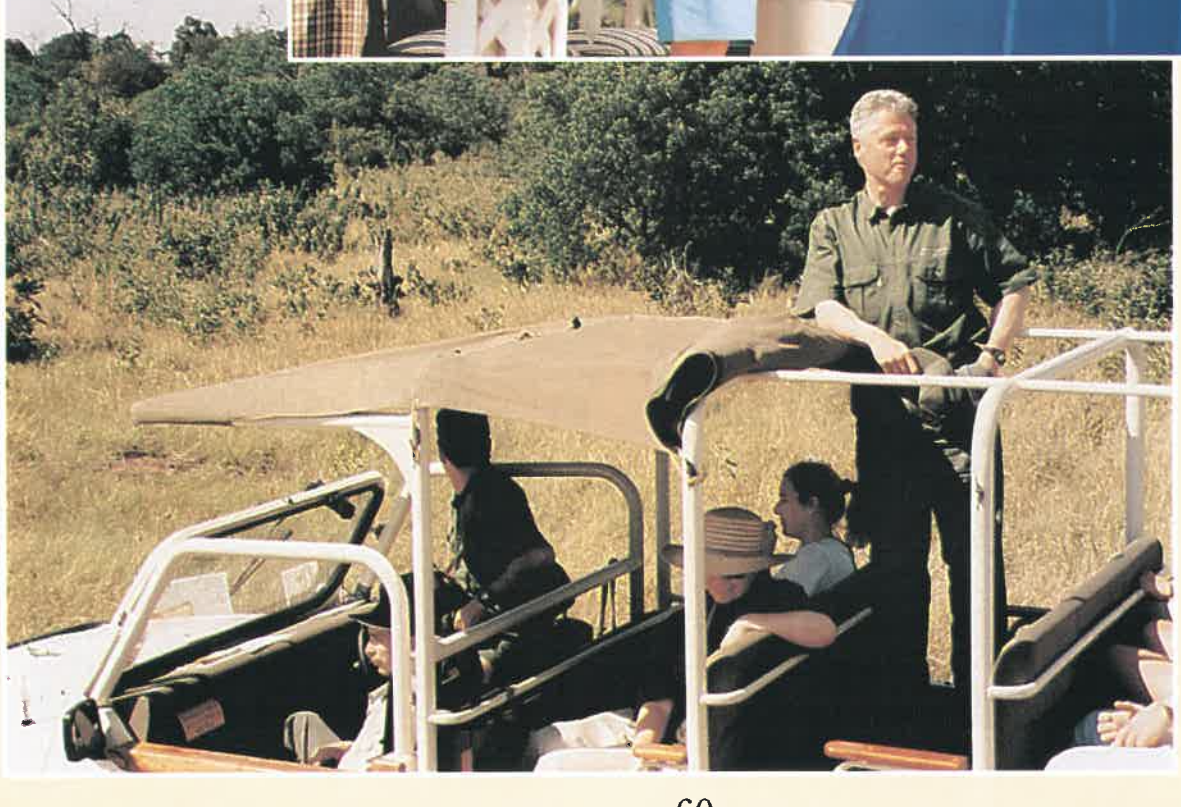
Sir Ketumile Masire, and President Bill Clinton, at State House, Gaborone, March 1998



President Bill Clinton met with Government dignitaries and Members of Parliament on his arrival at Sir Seretse Khama Airport in Gaborone

When in Botswana the President of USA, Bill Clinton visited the Chobe National Park in Kasane to view some wildlife. The President was accompanied by his wife Hilary Clinton

Mrs. Hilary Clinton and Lady Masire at The State House, Gaborone



President Clinton at Chobe National Park in Kasane

Farewell address by His Honour Mr Festus G Mogae, Vice President and Minister of Finance and Development Planning at a State Banquet in honour of His Excellency the President Sir Ketumile Masire, Boipuso Hall, 31 March 1998

Your Excellency, President Sir Ketumile Masire and Lady Masire
Your Honour the Chief Justice and Mrs Nganunu
Your Honour the Speaker of the National Assembly and Mrs Nwako
Mwalimu Julius Nyerere
Honourable Ministers
The Honourable Leader of the Opposition, Dr Kenneth Koma
Honourable Members of Parliament
Your Excellencies Heads of Diplomatic Missions and International Organisations
Your Worship the Mayor of the City of Gaborone and Mrs Bagwasi
Ministers Fraternal
Distinguished Guests
Bagaetsho

I would like to begin by welcoming you all to this momentous occasion which marks what, I hope, I may be permitted to refer to as the "last supper" with His Excellency the President, Sir Ketumile Masire and Lady Masire. But, unlike the biblical "Last Supper", during which the Lord Jesus bade his Disciples farewell, before his crucifixion and Ascension into Heaven, His Excellency the President and Lady Masire will still be with us tomorrow and for many many days to come!

I wish to extend a special welcome to our distinguished guests, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, the Honourable Dr Sishai Nxumalo and Professor Steve Lewis and their respective spouses, who time and circumstance have permitted to come and share with us in this historic moment of our time. Their presence amongst us here tonight, not only bestows an honour upon the people of Botswana, it also brings back pleasant memories to their friend, our Guest of Honour, His Excellency President Sir Ketumile Masire.

It is indeed an honour and a privilege for me and my wife, to host this farewell dinner for His Excellency Sir Ketumile Masire and Lady Masire, on behalf of the Government and the people of Botswana. In words of one syllable, this occasion is an expression of gratitude by the people of Botswana to the President and the First Lady for all they have done for the country and its people. It is the culmination of the countrywide tour they began, early this year, to bid farewell to Batswana. May I, therefore, venture to say that this is the "Mother of all those farewells". The people of Botswana and your friends around the world, will remember you always, Sir.

The world will remember Sir Ketumile Masire as a leader of his country who decided to retire on his own volition. There are very few leaders around the world who chose

to retire from politics, without being forced by circumstances or constitutional requirements. I don't think I can count such leaders beyond the fingers of my hand, namely Mwalimu Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Leopold Senghor of Senegal and Sir Ketumile Masire of Botswana, all of them, Africans! Who else? I hear none. It is a mark of distinction for us, and for Africa.

Many Batswana will also remember Sir Ketumile Masire as a school teacher, a pioneering journalist, a successful farmer, a politician and, above all, a President and a Statesman. Sir Ketumile Masire has left an indelible mark in all these vast and varied fields of human endeavour. On the lighter side, many will miss his unique sense of humour, particularly his laughter and, of course, his sharp wit and great command of the Setswana language when addressing public meetings.

In all fields in which Sir Ketumile made a contribution, posterity should recall him more as one of those early politicians who helped bring about Botswana's Independence. Sir Ketumile, after excelling as a teacher who founded Seepapitso Secondary School, and they went full-time farming, still found time and energy to practise journalism and engage in the independence movement. Together with the late Sir Seretse Khama and others, Sir Ketumile participated in the Legislative Council and in the constitutional talks leading to Internal Self-government. He became Deputy Minister in that transitional government and, then, Vice President and Minister of Finance and Development Planning in the Government of the Republic of Botswana, and, until tonight, President of the Republic of Botswana.

The vast fields of achievement surveyed by President Masire were not attained by accident. He toiled long and hard to reach the heights of his career as President of the country. He and his contemporaries have bequeathed us the legacy of democracy, development, self-reliance and national unity. These four principles which the people of Botswana cherish, have stood the test of time.

As far as democracy is concerned, we have always practised a multi-party system of government and upheld human rights and the rule of law. In order to promote development, President Masire and his Government have always produced development plans, after consulting people from the village to the national level. Planning has always been an integral part of our development activity, because of the need to match demand to supply. We have avoided promising the nation milk and honey.

Today, we have just produced Vision 2016, after consulting all the people around the country. Self-reliance means that we should work hard to achieve more with our limited resources. All these cannot be possible without unity of purpose, hence the need to move ahead as a united nation.

The four principles, enunciated by President Masire and his contemporaries, have served us well as a nation, and we should hold on to them with hooks of steel. For those of us who have to follow on his footsteps, as the succeeding generation of leaders, we can only pledge to do our best.

Your Excellency and Lady Masire,

You yourselves have witnessed how deeply you have touched the people of Botswana during your farewell addresses around the country. Batswana from all walks of life, and across the political divide, have been very affectionate and generous to you. Your departure from the political scene has been very hard to digest, and I do not wish to make it harder by saying any more tonight. Batswana have said it all!

Once again, Good bye and fare thee well.

Bagaetsho, let us drink a toast in honour of His Excellency Sir Ketumile and the First Lady.

***PULA**.*

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Publishers of Educational Books

Congratulations to
His Excellency President Masire
for a job well done.

Wishing you the best

From the Management and Staff of Heinemann Botswana

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Address by the Minister for Education Honourable G K T Chiepe at a State Banquet in honour of the outgoing President and Lady Masire, Boipuso Convention Centre, 31 March 1998

Close to eighteen years ago Botswana suffered a mortal blow with the passing away of her beloved founder president, Sir Seretse Khama. Before the nation recovered from the shock there were murmurs of an election of a president! What? The elders whispered in utter disbelief! Even before the father of the nation is buried? Ga se ngwao ya rona. It is not our culture. It can't be done. To them it was callous, to put it mildly, to be already thinking as to who is next. But they were assured that according to the constitution of the Republic of Botswana as it then provided, although the Vice President immediately took over to perform the functions of the Office of the President, it was mandatory that within seven (7) days of the death of the President, the Speaker should call the National Assembly to elect a new President.

The worst thing that the nation could do to show their love and respect for the late President would be to trample the constitution - of which he was the chief architect - under foot. That would make him turn in his grave - and who knows what would happen? So Parliament hurriedly assembled and you, Sir, were duly and unanimously elected President of the Republic and you took charge of national issues, starting with the State Funeral.

Mosalagae molelo o se time. You have done us proud.

We have come a long way from July 1980 to March/April 1998, from equivocation, speculation and uncertainty of transition to planned, certain and orderly handing over of the State baton from one leader to another, whether with four months' notice as in the present case or with a few days' or longer notice depending on the circumstances prevailing. The constitution was amended last year to take care of all eventualities. Your successor, Sir, our host tonight, none other than His Honour the Vice President, will be sworn in tomorrow morning as His Excellency the President of the Republic and he can be sure of our support and loyalty.

So much has been said by so many people nationally, regionally and internationally and so eloquently that it is not easy for me to find anything more fitting to articulate or to choose to reiterate from the wealth of accolades which have been showered on our retiring President.

Children as young as those of the Lentsweletau Day Care Centre, the youth including the Tirelo Setshaba participants of Matsiloje and students of the University of Botswana, leaders and members of communities, teachers, colleagues in Government, his Colleagues in the region and the crowning cherry on the icing, the President of the United States of America, Mr Bill Clinton, right here on your home ground, have told Batswana what they already know.

The best I can do is to recount two or three instances which put his profile in sharp relief.

When the new Government of Botswana settled in Gaborone the community was in desperate need of practically everything especially people with skills. A group of citizens decided to borrow primary school facilities at night to run evening classes for those who had failed to gain admission to the very few secondary schools which existed then, and were working

in Gaborone. This "school" was christened Capital Continuation Classes or Triple C (and it still exists). One of the voluntary teachers at Triple C was none other than the then Vice President of the Republic - our retiring President. He taught Mathematics in the evenings after attending to his State duties during the day. Is there any better example. Once a teacher always a teacher! This is evident at kgotla meetings when he explains foreign exchange reserves or distance learning.

The traditional Motswana that he is, when he lead a family group to seek a wife for a cousin of his, he was able to kneel with his group before a group of young men, some of whom were junior officers in the civil service, without any difficulty. A whole Vice-President kneeling before officials and others when the latter came where they were waiting and - uttered the usual traditional greeting - Dumelang bagwe. He was in touch with his culture and there was no clash. He walked with kings but never lost the common touch.

I worked closely with him when I was Minister for Mineral Resources and Water Affairs and knew, like we all have always, that I had his complete support on difficult minerals negotiations once a position had been agreed, even when the going got tough. Yes, when the going got tough, the tough got going. As Minister for Foreign Affairs for ten years during a very difficult period with our big neighbour, South Africa, and during other taxing regional and international situations it was a real pleasure to work with him and for him. On a number of occasions when he said 'ladies first or no no don't stand' I had the temerity to say to him "No Sir, I am not a lady, I am your Minister, at your service!" Some times I would get away with it. Sometimes without saying so in so many words it was clear who the boss was, and I obeyed.

Among the many things I learned then were (1) I had to move fast or even run if necessary to keep pace with him and (2) not to stand on my toes to find him in a big gathering but to listen for his characteristic, infectious laughter wherever he was.

When on November 10, 1997, the President announced his retirement on 31st March 1998, he quoted Lord Tennyson's poem about the old order changing and yielding place to new ... and very much like King Arthur of the Round Table in his characteristic humbly ended up by saying "I do so with confidence in the future, in the full knowledge that there are other compatriots who will be able to continue our traditions of democracy and consultation, well considered foreign policy and above all, prudent economic management and financial administration ... I feel that I have played my part, given my very best, and regret only that one's best is not always sufficient..." What more can one do, than one's best?

In the debate that followed I quoted Rudyard Kipling's IF - "if you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs and blaming it on you ... or walk with kings nor lose the common touch ..." as a most apt description of the man we are bidding farewell.

Mme-Mma Gaone - deserves praise in her own right for all she has done for and with the disadvantaged particularly the children. We thank her for all this but above all for her unfailing support of our President in his onerous duties at home and abroad almost to the neglect of her own personal interests.

On behalf of the people of Botswana and on my own behalf I wish the retiring first couple of this nation God's blessings and a prosperous and happy future.

I thank you.

Speech by His Excellency Sir Ketumile Masire at the State Banquet marking his retirement from the Presidency hosted by His Honour the Vice President Mr Festus Gontebanye Mogae Gaborone - 31st March, 1998

Salutations,

Allow me, at the outset, to express to you, Mr Vice President (or should I now say Mr. President) and through you to the people of Botswana, my heartfelt gratitude for this wonderful evening, marking my last hours in the Presidency of the Republic of Botswana.

I thank you for the good effort you have made in ensuring that the invitees to this dinner comprise a cross section of, not only our society but, my family, relatives, friends and people I have closely worked with in my various careers as teacher, farmer, journalist and politician.

I would like to specially recognise the presence in our midst of former President of the Republic of Tanzania, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Swaziland Dr S S Nxumalo and Professor Steve Lewis and their companions.

Master of Ceremonies, many speakers tonight have showered me with praises. In fact it is good that tomorrow I will no longer be President, otherwise I would stand the danger of being a victim of complacency. I would sit back and say - after all people know I am quite capable. However, I than you all for the good things you have said about me and our country - Botswana.

Well, we are all familiar with the saying that - all journeys, long or short, start with the first step. My first step was in 1961 when my predecessor and dear friend, the late Sir Seretse Khama and I, met with others and decided that the destiny of our country needed to be determined by us, the indigenous sons and daughters of the land.

With some vision, ideas and total determination that we had in common, we decided to form a political party and named it the Bechuanaland Democratic Party. With resolute determination and commitment we pioneered a process of self-rule. This was indeed a bold stance as many people thought that we were either down-right fool-hardy or very brave to think that we could stand on our own. This, however, did not deter us.

We were fortunate to later in the years discover minerals, especially diamonds. This discovery, combined with the BDP's prudent management has made our economy what it is today. This success, I must also add, has been made possible by a number of factors. One of them was the excellent and varied advice and expertise we got from our development partners in the developed and developing countries.

Master of Ceremonies, as I leave the Presidency I want to pour my heart out to Botswana for the co-operation they have accorded me as their leader and for the good name they have made for their country. Botswana is well renowned for her working democracy. Thanks to our tradition of the Kgotla - which is the crucible of our democracy.

The principles of mutual tolerance, freedom of expression, association and individual rights, to mention just a few, have always been pillars of our tradition.

I am very pleased that Batswana have lived to uphold and nurture the cherished qualities of consultation, co-operation, unity in diversity and mutual tolerance. Indeed, I will move into my retirement life without having, not even once, regretted why I every agreed to lead Botswana.

Master of Ceremonies, our region has gone through very turbulent and trying times. At some stage, it was a hive of activity characterised, on one side, by oppressive minority regimes, and on the other by the forces of liberation. For us little Botswana, these were trying times, we more often became the suffering grass being trampled by the fighting bulls. Batswana, because of their conviction that their brothers and sisters around them should also enjoy the fruits of freedom and independence understood and appreciated the need for our involvement and sacrifice in the struggle. We made our own contribution however modest.

It is here that I want to pay a special tribute to my predecessor, Sir Seretse and his colleagues, and I am gratified that one of them is here with us tonight - Mwalimu Julius Nyerere. Together, they deployed the Frontline States and SADC in the fight for freedom and economic independence. SADC, today, is a full-fledged vehicle for economic integration and political mobilisation in Southern Africa.

Today our region enjoys relative peace and stability. Our economies are progressing well, democracy has found route and is increasingly becoming the culture of our regional politics. Mwalimu, thank you very much for your sterling contribution. Asante sana!

The only remaining unfinished business is the situation in Angola. It is our wish that the Government of Angola could find a way to convince Dr Jonas Savimbi and his followers that without unity and peace, there can be no development. We urge Dr Savimbi to observe and comply with the letter and spirit of the Lusaka Peace Accords.

Master of Ceremonies, I have since the beginning of last month traversed the length and breadth of this country bidding farewell to Batswana. It was indeed a very touching experience. Batswana went all out to make our retirement an enjoyable one. The good wishes they poured on my wife and me, will always remain in our hearts. As for the prayers, I am even inclined to believe that since God Almighty is sympathetic to hear, we will never fall ill. 'Re segofaditswe, tota, jaanong re tshwanetse ra bo re le bana ba Modimo'. Batswana have overwhelmed us with gifts. We shall forever remain deeply indebted to them. Le ka moso, Bagaetsho.

Master of Ceremonies, I wish to conclude by reiterating my gratitude to you all, for this occasion which has been organised in my honour and in honour of my entire family.

I wish my successor, Festus Mogae, well in his new task as the leader of this great Botswana nation. I pray that we all should give him the support that I have always enjoyed as President of Botswana.

May God bless you Festus. May God bless our nation.

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